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THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

BY

ALBERT THEODORE HELBING

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Board of University Studies of the Johns Hopkins University in Conformity with the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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BALTIMORE

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TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER

AND MY WIFE

PREFACE

This monograph is the result of investigations begun by the author while a member of the Economic Seminary of The Johns Hopkins University. For documentary sources, the large collection of trade union publications contained in The Johns Hopkins University Library was used, but it was supplemented by material in the Library of Congress and in the library of the U. S. Department of Labor. An official of the American Federation of Labor was kind enough to place some material from the Federation's files at the author's disposal. The material from these sources was supplemented by personal interviews with trade union officials in Washington, Baltimore and Toledo.

The author wishes to express his appreciation of the inspiration and the assistance he received at every stage of the inquiry from Professor J. H. Hollander and from Professor G. E. Barnett.

A. T. H.

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INTRODUCTION

In response to changing beliefs, needs and industrial conditions, labor organization in America has taken on various forms. Students of labor union structure have attempted to classify these changing institutions into rival forms: labor unions versus trade unions; industrial unions versus craft unions; mixed assemblies and trade assemblies; amalgamations or federations; local or place unionism versus national trade unionism; company unions versus bona fide unions; and class conscious, socialist-led unionism as opposed to a more narrow, opportunist unionism—these are phrases that indicate some of the groupings.

It is not necessary that all these forms be discussed or defined in order to indicate the evolution in trade union structure from the original local craft union to the present national federations of labor. A twofold classification, followed by a summary, should indicate this development sufficiently well. The wage earners first banded themselves into local craft (trade) unions—more or less continuous associations of the wage workers of a particular trade and locality for the purpose of maintaining or improving their economic position. This form of organization has never been superseded, but it has been assailed. One set of critics within the labor ranks has thought that all the wage earners of a particular locality—town or city, for example—should be organized into one union. The local mixed assemblies of the Knights of Labor may serve as an example of what this group wanted. Advocates of "One Big Unionism" today wish the local manifestations of their ideal to take that form. The craft unionists, also, have recognized that the wage earners of a locality have certain common aims. To attain these aims—partly political in character—local trade unions choose delegates to represent them in a local federation. A modification of this form of organization may be seen in the federa-

tions of the local craft unions of an industry. These are generally called local councils or trade councils. The Allied Printing Trades Councils or local Building Trades Councils are examples. This particular development has spread beyond the confines of the cities and we find state federations of labor and state building trades councils.

Another group of critics wanted local unions which would admit to membership all the workers in a locality who worked in one industry regardless of the trade or task of the worker. Industrial unionism has been the shibboleth of this militant wing of the ranks of labor. The desires of this group are in obvious conflict with the plan of those who have organized the trade councils.

A similar division of opinion is discernible when we consider union organization in its national forms. The first natural step on the part of the local craft unions of various cities was the formation of national or international trade unions. The local unions delegated certain powers of oversight and administration to national officers. Up to the present time the national trade union—for example, the Iron Molders' Union or the Bricklayers' Union—has been the dominant form of national labor organization in America. The chief theoretical rival of the national trade union has been the so-called industrial union. The argument for this form of organization runs somewhat as follows: Large scale production is the rule of the day. Even if there has not been a merging of the business units so that there are only a few large ones, thus giving the employing group a tactical advantage when its opponents are organized by crafts, there is apt to be at least a nationally organized and adequately financed employers' association in the industry. Successfully to confront such a formidable opponent, labor needs to be organized industrially. The United Mine Workers of America is usually given as the chief example of such an organization. All the workers in and around the mines are eligible to membership. The more idealistic and radical exponents of this form were represented by the Industrial Workers of the World.

The American Federation of Labor, in the national field, is a counterpart of the local federations of craft unions. It has been the champion of trade or craft autonomy and has opposed with varying degrees of success the plans of those who favor industrial unionism. Another group has favored national trade federations similar in structure to the local trade councils. It is this movement which has resulted in the formation of the Departments of the American Federation of Labor. A Department, therefore, is a federation of the national unions in a particular industry or a federation of closely associated national unions in one part of an industry.

The Departments are in part due to conflict between the national unions and the local trade federations. The federations sometimes helped the local union of a national when the national body was attempting to discipline the nonconforming local. Furthermore, local federations were combining their forces and were hindering the development of strong national trade unions. The national unions of a particular industry could follow three paths: they could do nothing; they could fight the local federations or councils from the outside; or they could join in the movement for federation and attempt to direct or control them from within. They chose to do the latter. As a result, under the tutelage of the A. F. of L., another form of union structure has been added to the list.

The Building Trades Department was organized in 1908. Since then four others have been formed, namely, the Metal Trades, the Railway Employees, the Union Label trades and the Mining Departments. Seventeen national unions comprise the Building Trades Department. There are local and state building trades councils. The Metal Trades Department also establishes local and district councils. There are sixteen national unions in this federation. The Railway Employees Department has had an interesting history. It is concerned chiefly with promoting the interests of six shop craft unions, but has included in its membership three other railroad unions. Instead of local federations of trade union-

ists, the Railway Department has established system federations and inter-system federations of federations. The Union Label Trades Department was organized in 1909. In 1926 there were about forty-two labor unions holding membership in this Department. The Mining Department has historical interest only. During its short life it represented the chief mining groups, the oil well workers and also several national trade unions whose members worked in or near the mines.

THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

CHAPTER I

The Building Trades Department

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Local building trades leagues or councils were formed in the United States soon after 1865 and increased in number thereafter so that we find them in many of the large cities in the last decade of the nineteenth century. One of their important objects was to enforce the joint closed shop.[1] When properly organized and capably managed these local councils enabled the local unions to bargain more effectively with the contractors. But disadvantages in the method of organization soon became evident. The belief in the adequacy of local joint action as a means of pressure on the employers helped to retard the centralization movement in the building trades unions and kept the national unions weak. Under such a form of organization, local inter-union politics brought on sympathetic strikes costly to the employers, the employees and the public. Independent unions, dual in character to well-established national unions, were better able to exist. The local council sought, unsuccessfully, to settle jurisdictional disputes on a local basis. Naturally, the larger national unions looked askance at all these assumptions of power.

The need for uniformity in settling demarcation disputes and the advantages to be gained from a standardized policy led to the suggestion that some form of organization be set up to control the local councils. New conditions in the industry, such as the inter-city and inter-state work of large contractors also brought problems which required a national

[1] Frank T. Stockton, The Closed Shop in American Trade Unions, pp. 99-100.

federation for their solution. In response to the agitation for experiments in joint action and to the changing conditions in the industry, the National Building Trades Council of America was formed in 1897. Mr. H. W. Steinbiss of the St. Louis Council was the moving spirit in it and was its chief officer.[2] The local councils were the important parts of this federation; at conventions each council had one vote and each national trade union had one vote also. The national unions affiliated were small ones, or were rival unions to those affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.[3] The Painters, the Plasterers, the Electrical Workers and the Steam Fitters were the most prominent organizations holding membership in this federation, but they all soon withdrew.[4]

Local unions in the local trades councils often violated the laws of their national unions in order to act in accordance with the policies of the Council. These conflicts of authority soon led the more important national unions to disapprove strongly of the Council. The A. F. of L., as evidenced by President Gompers' remarks to the convention in 1900, was opposed to both the national and local organizations. The latter were considered "dual" to the Central Labor Unions. In order to avoid this conflict, the Central Labor Union of Buffalo instituted what was called a sectional plan. Kindred trades were organized into sections under the central body.[5]

The next step toward the present arrangement was taken October 8, 1903. On that date the Structural Building Trades Alliance of America was created. This Alliance was a means by which certain national unions joined forces to fight independent dual unions—both local and national.[6] Nine national unions took part in the preliminary meetings. When the

[2] William Kirk, National Labor Federations in the United States, p. 81. Later on (1904) the name was changed to International Building Trades Council.

[3] Proceedings, The National Building Trades Council. 1900-1904.

[4] W. Spencer, The American Federationist, vol. 23 (1916), p. 560.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 561. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters was fighting the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters, and the Woodworkers. The Painters had a secessionist group to deal with, and the Plumbers and Steam Fitters were waging war.

plan adopted was put to a referendum vote of the unions, the Bricklayers and the Electrical Workers refused affiliation. At a second meeting of representatives in Indianapolis, Mr. Buchanan of the Iron Workers was chosen president and Mr. Spencer of the Plumbers, secretary.[7]

Although the Alliance, too, was short lived, a few facts concerning its structure and activities are of interest. Membership was to be confined to national unions in the building trades on a "group plan"—mason group, woodworking, pipe fitting, decorating, plastic, iron working groups and so on.[8] Sympathetic strikes were to be discouraged. Arbitration was favored in the settlement of demarcation disputes. Local alliances (councils) were to be formed with local boards of governors to handle grievances and disputes. A national board of governors was to be formed to handle disputes which could not be taken care of locally.[9] The refusal of the Bricklayers and Plasterers to come in, followed about a year later by the withdrawal of the Iron Workers and the Painters, left the organization numerically weak. The potentialities in such a federation, however, coupled with the conviction that local councils would persist, seem to have been the stimuli that caused the responsible officers of the larger building trades unions in the A. F. of L. to favor action leading to a permanent national federation.

Accordingly, about five years after the formation of the Structural Building Trades Alliance, negotiations entered into by a committee from the Alliance and one from the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. led to the adoption of a report at the Norfolk (1907) convention that "a department of building trades of the A. F. of L. be created." The Alliance was absorbed in the new federation which was chartered at Washington, D. C., February 10, 1908. The Building Trades Department, therefore, has had a continuous existence of over twenty years.

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[7] United Brotherhood of Carpenters. Proceedings (1904), pp. 38-40.
[8] American Federationist, op. cit., p. 562.
[9] Constitution, see Bridgeman's Magazine, January (1904), pp. 5-8.

STRUCTURE

About seventeen national unions now comprise the membership of the Building Trades Department.[10] Membership is limited to those unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor which are bona fide building trades unions, that is, whose members are "employed in the building industry either in erection, repair or alteration."

The activities of the Department are carried on through an annual convention, the paid officers, an executive council and the local building trades councils. The last are federations of local unions of the building industry in various towns and cities in the United States and Canada. The constitution permits the formation also of state building trades councils. In 1927 the acting secretary-treasurer reported eight state councils and three hundred and sixty-six local councils, which, with the membership of the seventeen national unions, gave a total affiliated membership of 600,502.[11]

Legislative and judicial functions are centered in the annual conventions of the Department generally held just prior to the A. F. of L. convention and in the same city. The basis of representation in the convention is one delegate for each national union of less than 4,000 members, two for those with 4,000 or more, three for 8,000 or more, and so on. On a roll call vote, however, which can be secured by demand of one-fourth of the delegates, organizations having seven or more delegates are entitled to two votes for each delegate.[12] In the earlier attempts at national federations, local councils sent delegates whose voting strength exceeded that of delegates from the national unions. That procedure was one reason for the failure of the earlier alliances. The chief executive and administrative activities are exercised by the two paid officers, the president and the secretary-treasurer, chosen tri-ennially, who with six vice-presidents elected annually, constitute the Executive Council.[13] This latter body

[10] Proceedings, Building Trades Department (1927), pp. 1-2.
[11] Ibid., p. 56.
[12] Ibid., Constitution, Sec. 5, p. 5. [13] Ibid., p. 5.

is usually made up of some of the chief executive officers of the larger affiliated unions, and is able to wield much authority over local councils.

Although the Department has adopted a uniform constitution and set of by-laws for the guidance of local councils to secure greater unity in policy and greater control, the guidance has been more nominal than real in many places. The councils are delegate bodies whose size varies with the membership of the local unions of building trades in the community. For a trade union with 100 members or less, two delegates are allowed; 200 members or more, four delegates; 400 members or more, five delegates; 800 or more, six, and so on. No trade is allowed more than ten delegates. A large number of officers is provided for, but generally the work of the local council tends to be carried on by the business agents of the unions affiliated with the local council. One of the difficulties met with has been the refusal of the national unions to compel their local unions to affiliate with councils wherever they can.[14]

The State Building Trades Councils, like State Federations of Labor, are primarily interested in proposed state legislation. These bodies represent the political side of organized labor in the States, in so far as the building trades are specially organized.

FUNCTION

Perhaps more than any other Department, that of the Building Trades has been used by writers on trade unionism as an example of a shifting of ground from craft unionism to a higher level—industrial unionism.[15] The activities of local councils in various parts of the country prior to the formation of the Department, undoubtedly led to the belief

[14] George E. Barnett, "The Dominance of the National Union," in The Quarterly Journal of Economics, May, 1913, p. 480. For a detailed discussion of the activities of an important local council, see R. E. Montgomery, Industrial Relations in the Chicago Building Trades, 1927, University of Chicago Press.

[15] See M. D. Savage, Industrial Unionism in America, p. 37, or Hoxie, Trade Unionism in the United States, p. 118.

that the national federation of building tradesmen was a confession of the failure of the separate craft unions to advance the interests of their respective memberships. Although many of these craft organizations have been designated "amalgamations of related trades,"[16] and also "semi-industrial"[17] unions, they do represent, nevertheless, especially in the building industry, rather clear cut trades. Each requires a high degree of skill that is not easily transferable. The local character of the industry, however, has made the development of dual unions comparatively easy and has thereby delayed the centralization movement in these trades. Furthermore, active local leaders, influenced by intra-union political purposes or desire for financial gain, have at times dominated the scene and have interfered with the development of the more important national unions.

The fear of not being able to keep the membership at work, which is caused by changes in materials, tools and methods, has been responsible for the enlargement of the jurisdiction claims of some of the unions. The overlapping of these claims has brought about disputes between the Stone Cutters and the Stone Masons, between the Bricklayers and the Plasterers, between the Carpenters and the Sheet Metal Workers, and between the Electrical Workers and the Elevator Constructors—to list a few. These extended claims have made some of these unions far more than craft unions. Mr. Kirby, at one time president of the Department, once said that he could pick out four trades with such wide trade claims that if these claims were allowed in full there would be little use for any other crafts on the job.

These overlapping claims led to inter-union conflicts which often brought on the sympathetic strikes so costly to employee, builder and public alike. Attempts at local settlements brought only temporary relief and different decisions for similar disputes in various cities. The national officers

[16] T. W. Glocker, "Amalgamation of Related Trades in American Unions," in American Economic Review, 1915, p. 554.

[17] S. Blum, Jurisdictional Disputes Resulting from Structural Differences in American Trade Unions, Univ. of Calif. Pub. in Economics, III, No. 3, 1913, p. 411.

saw the need for a national handling of this problem and also other possibilities in a national department controlled by the strong national unions.

The Department, as set forth in its constitution,[18] seeks to encourage the formation of local councils, to adjust trade disputes and to improve relations between workers and employers. Its functions in the main have to do with helping to organize local councils, giving uniformity to the demands made on the employers when trade agreements are being sought, acting as a clearing house for trade affairs as they affect the men, seeking beneficial legislation and serving as a mediator in local and national disputes between unions and between local councils and employers. The Department has also negative as well as the above positive functions to perform; it proclaims its hegemony of building trades unions' affairs, just as the A. F. of L. does for the general trade union movement. During the early years of the Department, the officers spent much of their time seeking to have the eligible national unions affiliate, and trying to get the local unions in the various cities to form local councils. Not until 1916 did the Bricklayers' Union affiliate with the A. F. of L. and thereby become eligible for membership in the Department. Local unions of Bricklayers, however, were affiliated with local councils in many places.

The organizing of local councils includes attempts to settle the claims of rival factions for charters and persistent endeavors to amalgamate dual organizations, especially in the carpentry, the pipe fitting and the various roofing trades. For example, the president of the Department had to go to St. Louis in December, 1908, to help settle a dispute growing out of applications for charters from dual unions. The negative function of the Department is illustrated by an example from the same city. Differences had been composed, and things were satisfactory in St. Louis, until a dissension arose as a result of the split in the Electrical Workers national union into the Reed and McNulty factions. The

[18] Proceedings, Building Trades Department, 1926, p. 6, Sec. 2.

Department threatened to revoke the Council's charter unless the Council would desist in its recognition of the local union not sanctioned by the Department and the A. F. of L.[19] The Council did not obey the mandate of the Department, and it required many trips of Department and national union officers to St. Louis to bring the warring factions together.[20] Similar struggles occurred in other cities—the councils refusing in some cases to heed the advice or orders of the Department officers. In Birmingham, the charter of the Council was revoked for refusing to oust the Reed faction of the Electrical Workers.[21] Subsequently, it was restored after the Council had complied with the request of the Department.[22] A detailed examination of the difficulties in all of these cases would probably indicate the same underlying problems: unscrupulous or ambitious local leaders, dual unions, inter-union politics, and disruptionist tactics of paid agents or cranks.

A more important and more interesting manifestation of both positive and negative functions of the Department may be seen in its work in eliminating dual national organizations and in fostering the merging of organizations. An English trade union, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, had established a branch in this country. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in America, a much larger union, was opposed to this organization. It asked the A. F. of L. to revoke the dual union's charter because it had refused to accept a plan of amalgamation with the Brotherhood outlined by the Executive Council of the A. F. of L.[23] The charter of the Amalgamated Society was revoked in August, 1912.

A similar controversy took place between the International Association of Steam and Hot Water Fitters and Helpers, and the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters and Steam Fitters' Helpers. For years the two organizations had carried on constant warfare, each

[19] Ibid., 1909, p. 13.
[20] Ibid., 1912, pp. 28-29.
[21] Ibid., 1910, pp. 69-70.
[22] Ibid., 1916, p. 67.
[23] Ibid., 1912, p. 74.

seeking to organize the men of the trade and dragging other unions into strikes to help them enforce their respective claims. Repeatedly, the A. F. of L., and then the Department, had urged conferences between the two organizations so that some adjustment could be made, but to no avail. Finally, the Executive Council of the Department brought representatives together at Washington in January, 1909. When no agreement could be reached the Council held a later session at Pittsburgh, and handed down a decision in which it proposed an acceptable course of future action.[24] Among other things, it recommended a vote of the membership of the two unions as to the advisability of having only one national trade union in the Pipe Fitting industry. The Steam Fitters appealed from this decision. Delegates from both organizations at the Tampa (1909) convention aired their views on the amalgamation of the two unions. The Steam Fitters did not want to be swallowed up in the Plumbers' organization.[25] An agreement could not be reached even after further efforts of the Executive Council. The latter body then recommended that, inasmuch as the Steam Fitters had disobeyed certain decisions, the convention (1910) should try to enforce obedience or have the charter of this recalcitrant union revoked.

The convention considered the matter and finally passed a motion to suspend the Steam Fitters.[26] No delegates from that union appeared at the next convention.[27] During strikes in Chicago, the local council sustained the Plumbers' Union. Some unaffiliated local unions upheld the Steam Fitters. The Executive Council brought representatives of both sides together in Cincinnati, and finally Mr. Madden of the Local Fitters and Mr. O'Donnell of the Local Plumbers, in June, 1911, signed a truce which brought the warfare in Chicago to a close.[28] In 1912 the president of the Department reported that a conference between the presidents of the two national unions had not resulted in the adoption of a plan of amalga-

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., p. 3.
[26] Ibid., 1910, p. 120.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., 1911, p. 27.

mation, but in the next report it was stated that amalgamation had been accomplished.[29]

The overlapping claims of the Bricklayers and the Plasterers resulted in fights between these two organizations. In some places the local councils took sides against the Bricklayers who were not affiliated with the A. F. of L. and the Department. An officer of the Bricklayers objected to the formation of unions dual to his organization. The Department advised this officer, Mr. Preece, that it did not give encouragement to such practices, but did recognize that the local councils, favoring such tactics, had some reason for thus trying to secure greater cooperation from the Bricklayers.[30] The Plasterers were probably back of some of these moves. The Cement Workers Union also found itself greatly handicapped because of the opposition of the Bricklayers.[31] Finally, to strengthen the two weaker organizations in the disputes, an agreement was reached August 30, 1915, under the terms of which the Cement Workers agreed to amalgamate with the Plasterers, thus forming the Operative Plasterers' and Cement Finishers' International Association.[32]

That the national unions and local councils continue to give much trouble to the Department officers who are taxed with the job of organizing local councils, getting all "regular" locals in, and keeping out locals without national affiliation, is apparent from various remarks of the president during recent years. For example, in 1922, President Donlin said: "In some localities local unions and councils are not productive of their objective, but on the contrary are injurious to all associated."[33] The New York Council had its charter revoked by the Executive Council, at the request of the Painters' Union, which claimed that the Local Council was admitting delegates contrary to law. Dual councils had been formed

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[29] Ibid., 1913, p. 61.
[30] Ibid., 1909, pp. 26-27.
[31] Ibid., 1915, pp. 51-52.
[32] Compare lists of organizations in the Department prior to 1920 and thereafter.
[33] Proceedings, Building Trades Department, 1922, p. 58.

in Chicago, New York and Cleveland even after the building boom was on. Even as late as 1926, it was reported that the division in the building trades ranks in Cleveland, which had lasted for three years, was unsettled. It was recommended that a conference of international officers should meet in that city to try to solidify the trades.[34]

Local councils have frequently backed sympathetic strikes. Many of these strikes were not against unfair contractors or employers, but were local wars for the purpose of aiding rival unions in their jurisdictional disputes. If proper contractual relations were to be established with the employer, bitter controversies such as these would have to be eliminated. From the beginning, the Department took the stand that local councils were prone to take hasty action in calling such strikes, and that it would be better to complete the work and seek to prevent a repetition on another job than to endanger the council.[35] An example of the Department's capacity for controlling joint action is an early sympathetic strike which it aided. A large contracting company, the Westlake Construction Company, had work in St. Louis, Peoria and Indianapolis. The painting work on a municipal building in the latter city was to be done by a sub-contractor "unfair" to union painters. This contractor agreed to use union men on the one job, but not on others. All trades struck in sympathy, but the Bricklayers and Stone Cutters soon returned to work. When the general contractor took steps to fill the places of the men who had quit, plans were made at once to stop the work of this firm in these other cities. The Westlake Company asked for a conference with the officers of the Department and officials of the national unions affected. The conference was held and the company put pressure on the sub-contractor to the extent that the request of the Indianapolis Council was satisfied.[36]

Two years later, in the fall of 1911, when a Stone Cutter was President of the Department, the Kansas City Council was insisting that the affiliated locals could not endorse a

[34] Ibid., 1926, p. 46. [35] Ibid., 1909, p. 9. [36] Ibid., 1909. p. 14.

strike in sympathy with the Journeymen Stone Cutters on a George A. Fuller Company job, unless other councils would strike Fuller jobs at the same time. The work in question was on the new Union Depot, but the Stone Cutters were trying to put pressure on the Fuller Company in order that they might unionize the establishment of the Reed Stone Company in Bedford, Indiana, the contractors who were to supply the cut stone. The comtemplated action would have been a sympathetic strike and a joint boycott. The Kansas City Council had agreed to strike the work on the depot unless the Reed Company employed union Stone Cutters. The men returned to work when an official of the Fuller Company told Mr. Mitchell of the Stone Cutters that he would seek to bring about a meeting between the Union and the Stone Company. The meeting did not materialize, and the Council would not back another strike. Mr. Short told the Council secretary that the requested strikes on other Fuller jobs could not be ordered by the Department, but asked that the Council treat the Stone Cutters as loyal trade unionists.[37]

The same union, but a different contractor, became involved in a dispute during 1912 and 1913. The Thompson-Starrett Company had awarded the contract for stone on the Field-Columbian Museum, in Chicago, to the Norcross Brothers Company of Massachusetts. It was estimated that the work would require the services of two or three hundred stone cutters for about three years. In December, 1912, the Department asked the Thompson-Starrett Company to influence the sub-contractor to stop using non-union men. The general contractors, who were having no trouble, refused to do anything. Thereupon, the Chicago Building Trades Council called a strike on the Continental Commercial Bank Building, a large structure being erected by the same Company. After the strike had lasted about ten days, representatives of the Department, the Council, the architect and the contractors met and agreed on a plan of action that would force the hand of the Norcross Company, and permit resumption of work on the Bank Build-

[37] Ibid., 1912, pp. 39-41.

ing. The bona fide unionists were hindered in their work by the "No. 2" dual council in Chicago, which sought to wreck the plans of the interested parties by invoking an old injunction. The injunction was dismissed. Shortly thereafter, the Norcross Company entered into an agreement with the Stone Cutters Union. They agreed to employ none but members of this Union, and signed a three-year agreement with the local union of the Stone Cutters Association to have them do the work.[38]

Mr. Spencer, secretary-treasurer of the Department, had this to say in 1912, in a letter to Mr. Gompers:

> The best evidence that there has been a steady and continuous development of the Building Trades Department can perhaps be found in the fact that we have succeeded in promoting a higher type of contractual relationship between the contracting interests of the Building Trades and our affiliated Internationals than has heretofore been known. This very desirable state of affairs has been brought about by the zeal which the Department and its several components have displayed in order to achieve one of the basic purposes of the Department, namely, the removal of the cause for conflict between allied bodies, with the consequent lessening in the number of sympathy strikes. . . . Happily, now, however, through the medium of the Department, the contestants in overlapping trade disputes meet in conference and reach either a mutually agreeable understanding or a postponement of contemplated action until a more appropriate opportunity. . . .[39]

Such a statement is rather one of policy than of achievement, for in the report of the Executive Council to the same convention, letters between the Department and certain large inter-state contractors bear witness to the failure of the plans of the Department in this regard. However, one year later, the Department was instrumental in settling a controversy between the building tradesmen of Cincinnati and their employers. Work of the Thompson-Starrett Company was held up in that city, because of a dispute between the Carpenters and the Sheet Metal Workers over erecting metal trim on a large building. The Carpenters were not in the Local Council and nothing was done. Five months after the strike, that is, in May, 1913, the employers locked out the workers. The Council appealed to the Department for help

[38] Ibid., 1913, pp. 36-37.

[39] Ibid., 1912, p. 63.

after the lockout had lasted several weeks. Mr. Short brought both sides together; an agreement was reached with a provision to the effect that "Jurisdictional decisions of the Building Trades Department are absolute and binding both on the contractors and the Building Trades and that after July 1, 1913, the architects were to so state in their specifications." [40] In his remarks concerning this settlement, Mr. Short said that if such a clause could find a place in all of the agreements between builders and unions or councils, peace would come to the industry so far as demarcation disputes were concerned. He said also that the Department had been trying for three years to bring such conditions to pass and that the conferences sought with general contractors in 1911 had for their purpose the nationalization of such a procedure.[41]

Mr. Williams, president of the Department in 1914, helped the Detroit Council negotiate an agreement with the James L. Stewart Contracting Company on February 3, 1914. The company was erecting a 20-story building for the Kresge Company, but had sub-let portions of the work to firms which were not employing union carpenters, steam fitters and painters. The Council was conducting a sympathetic strike. As a result of an agreement made possible by the mediation of Mr. Williams, a satisfactory settlement was secured. There was a provision in the agreement that there would be no further stoppage of work without subjecting the disputes to arbitration before a Board mutually agreed upon by the Council and the contractor.[42]

Building trade affairs in Chicago will serve to illustrate the nature of the disputes between the Department and national union officers on the one hand, and local unions and the local councils on the other. The employers of Chicago locked out all the members of the building trades unions in July, 1913, to indicate their dissatisfaction with the frequent sympathetic strikes arising out of jurisdiction disputes. The Chicago Council adopted what has been called the Standard Agreement, containing a provision that disputes would be

[40] Ibid., 1913, pp. 35-36. [41] Ibid. [42] Ibid., 1914, pp. 35-36.

settled by local arbitration.[43] When a new agreement was to be negotiated by the Council in March, 1915, some unions did not want to go along with the Council, but wished separate agreements with the employers.[44] They objected to the Standard Agreement, claiming that it was contrary to the law of the Department, and sought to have the Executive Council revoke the charter of the Chicago Council. The Department, however, acting upon the advice of the A. F. of L., refused to take such action. A committee of the 1915 convention brought in a recommendation that the national unions whose locals had caused the trouble and were not affiliated with the Chicago Council should be requested to have their local unions affiliate.[45] The primary object of the agreement was to put an end to sympathetic strikes and to set up a Joint Conference Board for the arbitration of disputes.[46] The Department had taken the stand that it was opposed to the frequent sympathetic strikes, yet it opposed this assumption of power by the local council, on the ground that it usurped certain prerogatives of the national unions and tended to weaken the policy of the Department in regard to a national settlement of jurisdictional disputes.

Another cause of frequent strikes in various centers was the long controversy between the Carpenters and the Sheet Metal Workers over the manufacture and erection of metal trim. Reference has been made to the settlement at Cincinnati in 1913. That is an isolated instance of the constant warfare between the two organizations, and one of the few examples of a peaceful solution. Strikes in New York over the erection of metal trim had been bitter ones. Judge Gaynor was called in as an arbitrator, but his decision (1909) granting the work in question to the Carpenters was objected to by the Sheet Metal Workers. The 1909 convention[47] reversed the decision of Judge Gaynor and supported the

[43] Ibid., 1913, p. 50.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid., 1915, pp. 77-78; and p. 107.
[46] R. E. Montgomery, op. cit., see chs. vi and vii for a detailed study of the standard agreement and how it worked.
[47] Ibid., p. 89.

Sheet Metal Workers in their claims. The attitude of the Carpenters, who refused to abide by the decision, led to their expulsion from the Department the following year. The question is still unsettled.[48]

Behind the demand that a national organization comprising building trades unions should be formed for the purpose of eliminating jurisdictional disputes, there seems to have been a desire on the part of the national union officers to use the national Department as a club to combat the "irregular" tactics of the local councils.[49] There was continual casting about for some method whereby the warring local unions could be made to obey the agreements of their national unions, or in the absence of such agreements, whereby the local unions and local councils would recognize the advantages involved in agreeing to submit grievances and disputes to the Department officers for their decision.

The national unions in the building trades did not seem able or willing to control their locals. The Chicago Council was backing up its joint agreement with employers in 1914 in their threatened lockout of the local union of Sheet Metal Workers. Mr. Williams asked the Council, on behalf of the Sheet Metal Workers' national organization, what steps it would take to protect that Union's interests. Mr. J. J. Conroy wired back to Washington: "The Sheet Metal Workers can avert the lockout by calling off all needless strikes that are on at present and by conforming to the rulings of the Department Building Trades Council and joint conference board."[50] Mr. Williams was later called to Chicago by all parties to the dispute which involved the affiliation in the local council of a trade whose national organization was not affiliated with either the Department or the A. F. of L.

Difficulties were enhanced during the period from 1915 to 1922 because of the depression in the building industry resulting from the curtailment of building operations during the

[48] Constitution and Decisions, National Board for Jurisdictional Awards in the Building Industry, February, 1927, pp. 35-36.
[49] Proceedings, Building Trades Department, 1921, pp. 109-125.
[50] Ibid., 1914, pp. 40-41.

war.[51] The president of the Department, in 1915, reported a year of depression with stagnation in some places. It was expected that, when the Brotherhood of Carpenters returned to the fold at the San Francisco (1915) convention, and when the Bricklayers' national union joined the A. F. of L. and the Department in 1916, a new impetus would be given to the work of the local councils.[52] The Department's membership and revenue became larger thereby, but the trade disputes did not end. Mr. Spencer, in his report to the 1918 convention, pointed out that the membership of the unions in the central portion of the country, which was hardest hit by the depression, could find work on government contracts along the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf Coasts. The officials found that new controversies grew out of these contacts with new employers.[53]

Realizing that the Department had been unable to command respect in many quarters and that it had not put a stop to the inter-union conflicts, and anticipating the need of some method of holding the men in line so that the abnormal post-war building program could be speedily and profitably carried through, the Department adopted the plan for handling disputes suggested by Mr. John B. Lennon of the Department of Labor. This plan took the form of the National Board for Jurisdictional Awards in the Building Industry. Two men representing the American Institute of Architects, one each for the Associated General Contractors of America, the National Association of Builders' Exchanges, and the American Engineering Council, together with a Mr. Luce, general contractor, and Mr. John B. Lennon of the Department of Labor, met officers of five national building trades unions in Cleveland, Ohio, in March, 1919, to consider a plan that would stabilize the industry, encourage resumption of building operations and eliminate waste through the reduction or abolition of jurisdictional strife. A tentative plan was drawn up and revised at a second meeting held in

[51] Ibid., 1921, p. 78.
[52] Ibid., 1916. pp. 56-57.
[53] Ibid., 1918, p. 33.

Indianapolis in April. Finally the plan proposed by Mr. Lennon was accepted.[54]

The immediate object of the National Board of Awards, as stated in its preamble, was to settle disputes as to jurisdiction over work that was claimed by more than one trade. The Board was to consist of eight members, three national union officials selected by the Department, two members chosen by the Associated General Contractors of America, and one each by the American Institute of Architects, the American Engineering Council and the National Building Trades Employers' Association.[55] In 1927, Mr. Miller of the Engineering Council was chairman, and the secretary-treasurer of the Building Trades Department was executive secretary.

The constitution provided that complaints must be submitted in writing through an organization signatory to the agreement, and that the Board should have power to investigate all disputes for the purpose of collecting data for its awards.[56] Should it fail to make an award, an umpire was to be called in; if the Board could not, by a two-thirds majority, decide upon an umpire, it was agreed that it would call upon the Secretary of Labor to name an umpire.[57] Article nine stated that "each signatory to this agreement hereby agrees that the membership of that organization shall not take part in sympathetic strikes in any case of jurisdictional disputes." It provided further that the national organization must enforce the awards, and that if any local organization refused to comply with the provisions and the awards, it should be suspended from its national union.[58] It was obligatory upon the national unions to see that a job was manned. Article 10 provided that the decisions should govern the architects and engineers in writing specifications and the contractors in awarding contracts.

The Board upheld the decision of the Department concerning metal trim, awarding the work to the Sheet Metal Work-

[54] Proceedings, Building Trades Department, 1919, pp. 58-62.
[55] Constitution, Art. 14. [56] Ibid. [57] Ibid. [58] Ibid.

ers. As a result, the Carpenters withdrew (1921) from the Department and refused to recognize the awards of the National Board. This defection affected adversely the financial status of the Department; before the Carpenters withdrew the total membership of the Department was 866,735; but in 1922 the secretary reported a membership of 507,356. It was, however, reported in 1922 that jurisdictional contention had caused less unrest during the year in review. The president recognized that the "off year" had something to do with the tranquility, but suggested that "the more potential factor has been the activities of the National Board—which body has rendered forty decisions on trade disputes affecting almost every International Union in the Department." [59]

The Elevator Constructors refused to abide by a decision of the Board rendered in December, 1920, which adjudicated a dispute between that union and the Electrical Workers. The work in question, electrical work on elevators, had been awarded to the Electrical Workers. An appeal of the Electrical Workers to the Executive Council because of the Elevator Constructors' refusal to abide by the decision, brought both parties before the Council. That body asked the officers to show cause why the Elevator Constructors should not be suspended, in line with the decision at Denver (1921) which had caused the Carpenters to withdraw. The notification of this action was sufficient to change the attitude of the Elevator Constructors, their national union agreeing to observe the decision without "qualification or reservation." [60]

If the officers of the Department, during this time, were calling attention to the great work of the Board, it must be remembered that duty and desire sometimes play pranks on perceptive faculties. If there were fewer grievances, could it not be traced, at least partly, to the fact that the unprecedented demands for men of all crafts removed one of the chief causes of dispute—the desire on the part of each union

[59] Proceedings, Building Trades Department, 1922, p. 68.
[60] Ibid., p. 85.

to keep all of its members at work? Even during the period of the Board's greatest success disputes which involved important advantages to one union or another were difficult to settle. For example, the Board had given a decision on May 26, 1923, that "the dressing, altering and finishing of artificial stone, cast in imitation of natural stone is the work of the Stone Cutters except that when any such artificial stone, by reason of hardness or texture, requires the use of granite cutters' tools for the proper dressing, altering or finishing, it is the work of the Granite Cutters."[61] The Stone Cutters claimed that during a dispute between themselves and two companies in New Haven, and the Donaldson Yards in New York City, the Granite Cutters had taken their places.[62] Both unions submitted resolutions to the 1924 convention; the Granite Cutters asked for the suspension of the Stone Cutters from the Department if the latter union did not live up to the decision of the Board, and the Stone Cutters asked that the Department reaffirm its position in regard to the Board and compel the Granite Cutters to meet the requirements of the decision.[63] The convention listened to the arguments of Mr. Mitchell of the Stone Cutters and Mr. Squibb of the Granite Cutters, and voted to uphold the resolution of the Stone Cutters.[64]

The dispute did not end there; the Executive Council tried to get the two presidents before it during 1925, but was not successful until September 28, 1925. The report of the Executive Council to the convention held the following month recommended that the Granite Cutters should be suspended from the Department unless, by November 30, 1925, they had removed their men from the yards in New Haven and other places where they were doing Stone Cutters' work.[65] Nevertheless, the Granite Cutters still objected to the interpretation put upon the National Board's decision. As a result of some pressure (the Granite Cutters have about 3,000 more members than the Stone Cutters), the secretary-treasurer of

[61] Decisions, National Board. op. cit. p. 43.
[62] Proceedings, Building Trades Department, 1924, pp. 74-75.
[63] Ibid., pp. 81-83. [64] Ibid., pp. 90-91. [65] Ibid., 1925, p. 73.

the Department tried to have Chairman Miller of the Board interpret the decision of May, 1923. The case was scheduled for August 2, 1926, but the Board voted that the interpretation be postponed and that the case be referred to the next convention of the Department.[66]

In 1924 the president admitted that the Department could not function if the national unions would not cooperate,[67] but still expected the National Board to bring the peace that the unionists were supposedly seeking. In 1923, a year earlier, Mr. Donlin had thought that a solution for some of the difficulties might be found in the establishment of all of the general offices of the national unions in one city.[68] At that time, the Plasterers and Bricklayers were again fighting each other, and the Carpenters were still out of the Department. The National Board was being criticized, but it was looked upon as a necessity; one officer suggested as a remedy for some of its difficulties, either taking off all labor members, or putting on one representative of each craft.[69]

The local councils were not in favor of the National Board; it was charged that the decisions were "cloudy." Mr. Hynes, of the Sheet Metal Workers, frequently stated that the decisions of the Board had been ineffective on account of local union politics in the various cities.[70] Dual councils and new alignments of disgruntled local unions made the work of the Board particularly difficult. All contractors were not parties to the plan; especially the sub-contractors found difficulty in determining whether to follow the decisions of the Board or to listen to the demands of the local council leaders. Mr. Hedrick, president of the Department during 1925, reported that in some places decisions of the Board had been entirely ignored; that in awarding contracts the owners or the contractors paid little attention to the decisions and awarded the work to some trade which, according to the ruling of the Board, was not entitled to the same. Frequent strikes, detrimental to the industry, had resulted.[71]

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[66] Ibid., 1926, p. 88.
[67] Ibid., 1924, p. 93.
[68] Ibid., 1923, pp. 45-46.
[69] Ibid., p. 57.
[70] Ibid., p. 123.
[71] Ibid., 1925, pp. 54-55.

That leadership has very much to do with the success of human institutions may be remarked in the added vigor of the Department with the coming of a new president in 1926. After a year under the new administration, we find the Carpenters back in the Department. The general officers of the Carpenters applied to the Executive Council on September 30, 1927, for reaffiliation. The convention was then in session at Los Angeles. It unanimously accepted the application, and invited representatives immediately to take seats in the convention.[72] When the convention reassembled for the afternoon session on the same day, it immediately voted to withdraw from any further participation in the plan of the Award Board. The reason for so doing found expression in the resolution proposing that action. It set forth that none of the employing interests, which were signatories to the plan adopted in February, 1922, for including in all specifications, contracts and agreements for building operations, a stipulation that all work be done in accordance with the decisions of the Board, had made a sincere attempt to comply with the provisions of the agreement.[73]

These two actions of the Department have put the unions back on a footing similar to that prior to 1919. All the recognized building trades unions are again members of the Department, but the amalgamations that have taken place have reduced the number of unions to seventeen. The period of steady employment and good wages, and the increasing number of trade agreements entered into by local councils, local and district unions and national unions, have ushered in a new era for building tradesmen. The agreement entered into by the Chicago Building Trades Council and the Building Construction Employers' Association on November 18, 1926, for a period of three years is a sample of what can be done.[74] When agreements similar to that can be adopted in

[72] Ibid., 1927, p. 79.
[73] Ibid., p. 89.
[74] Trade Agreements, 1926, U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 448, pp. 26-29. See excerpts from the agreements, local and national, signed by the separate building trades unions contained in that bulletin.

all the more important cities, by the councils, under the supervision of the various national unions working through the Building Trades Department, then it will be safe to call the Department a real substitute for the industrial form of organization.

Some students of industrial relations and of trade unionism may ask: What is the purpose of the Department? What does it do? Why keep it going? Similar questions might be asked concerning the American Federation of Labor. The description of the various forms of inter-union disputes and of concerted movements given in the preceding pages furnish an answer to these questions. In the first place, the Department is a "recognized" phase in the development of greater cooperation among the building trades unions of this country. It is the answer of the "business unionists" in the A. F. of L. to the plea that the building trades must handle their own affairs, but at the same time must provide for concerted action between the trades so that they can increase the pressure put on the employer. In order to eliminate the costly inter-union disputes, the Department has helped in the work of amalgamating some of the trades, and has tried to control the activities of the local councils. Examples of amalgamation have been given, but it is interesting to add to those examples the amalgamation of the Tile Layers with the Bricklayers.[75] This latter union will not desist in its aims to bring the members of the Operative Plasterers and Cement Finishers Union under its control. The smaller organizations always resent such proposals. The general strike of a building trades council called to uphold the decision of the National Board giving certain work in connection with artificial stone to the Plasterers and Cement Finishers, illustrates one of the functions of the Department. Mr. McSorley told the council that it had the right to uphold the decision of the Board, but not on work of contractors using union bricklayers where there was no dispute. After an appeal on the part of the Council to the Executive Council of the Depart-

[75] Proceedings, Building Trades Department, 1918, pp. 48-49.

ment, Mr. McSorley's decision was reversed and the position of the council was upheld.[76] The Department played its part by offering an impartial court before which the parties could appear. Without such a body of men conversant with building trades affairs, the disputants might not have been brought together at all.

The Department's control of local councils can come only through the national unions, and through them only after they have strengthened their hold over their local units. Conferences of general officers of the trades are called frequently under the auspices of the Department, to establish the policies to be followed in the various centers, and to assure the necessary uniformity so helpful in the work of making demands upon local councils. In the larger cities the Department and the national unions have not been able to control the councils. For example, the constitution of the Department provides that no local council shall enter into any agreement with an employer that requires members of affiliated unions to work with non-union men, or forbids the sympathetic strike.[77] Yet, in the 1926 agreement of the Chicago Council above referred to, the employees agree that there shall be no "strikes, stoppage, or the abandonment of the work either individually or collectively, by concerted or separate action . . . ." without arbitration of the dispute in the manner provided for.[78]

Another way in which the Department attempts to control the local councils and to prohibit the growth of unaffiliated or dual unions, is by the issuance of universal working cards to all members of the affiliated unions. Some trouble has been experienced because of the growth of certain state councils which acted as intermediaries in issuing these cards. The Ohio State Council, in 1924, had issued counterfeit universal working cards to the disqualified Cleveland Local Council.[79] The Aurora, Illinois, Local Council had sold working cards to members of unaffiliated organizations. In order to stop such

[76] Ibid., 1927, pp. 68-69.
[77] Constitution and By-laws to govern local councils, Sec. 3.
[78] Trade Agreements, op. cit., p. 26.
[79] Proceedings, Building Trades Department, 1924, p. 71.

practices, the Executive Council changed the style and plate of the universal working card and had it copyrighted.[80] Unless a workman has one of these cards, he is not to be allowed to work, and only members of the affiliated unions are supposed to get them.

Nation-wide or regional movements looking to the adoption of the shorter work day and certain other usually related demands are not part of the work of the Department. It tries to harmonize the demands of various unions which, through the national officers and the local council officials, attempt to develop the system of agreements which call for the joint closed shop. It works to establish more business-like relationships between the employer and the union employee by doing away with the conditions, as far as possible, that promote jurisdictional disputes. This latter tendency assumes form in various agreements such as that which brought the National Board into existence.

The Department has continued its efforts to get union shop conditions on all the work of inter-state contractors. Some of these large companies had agreements in certain cities calling for the employment of union men only. In other places they employed non-union men. The Executive Council, on July 7, 1926, met with the national officers of nine of the unions and discussed methods to be used to curb this practice of the Foundation Company of New York and other contractors.[81] The following year notice came to the Department that the James Stewart Company was erecting grain elevators in Kansas City under open-shop conditions. The Department notified the Company that it would refuse to recognize it as a fair firm in the future unless the Company operated with union men in all localities. It was reported that no further complaints had been received against this Company.[82] The general presidents of the national unions decided, August 2, 1927, to notify all inter-state contractors following such practices that they must cease to do so. The contractors were warned that they would be compelled to

[80] Ibid., pp. 73-74. [81] Ibid., 1926, p. 48. [82] Ibid., 1927, p. 43.

operate either with all union men, or all non-union men. The task of enforcing this policy was put in the hands of the Department's president.[83]

An example of what the Department can do in this direction is given by a recent case. The Sears-Roebuck Company was having a six-million-dollar building erected in Atlanta, but the contract had been awarded to the B. & W. Construction Company of Chicago, which attempted to do the work under the open shop plan. The Chicago Council is very powerful and has had agreements with the employers for many years. Conferences of Chicago Council officers and Department officers with officials of the Sears-Roebuck Company resulted in the unionizing of the Atlanta job for all trades.[84]

In the Department the national building trades unions have provided the machinery whereby they can be assured that inter-trade disputes will be given impartial consideration. They have preempted work formerly done by the officers of the A. F. of L., and have created their own special division for handling building trades affairs. The unions have erected a bureau of mediation and conciliation within their own ranks. The problems of the industry are put in the hands of a well-paid and experienced building trades officer. His office, together with that of the secretary-treasurer, becomes the central agency for affairs of the building trades unions, just as the office of the Executive Secretary of an Employers' Association centralizes the common aims of that group.

The Department officers can reach, easily and frequently, the ears of congressmen and executive officers, and hence can give direction to legislation in the interests of the men, and can establish those acquaintanceships which help clarify certain aspects of the problem of industrial relations. The secretary-treasurer tabulates and publishes, yearly, the prevailing union rates of pay for all the trades in the various cities.

What effect the withdrawal of the Department from the National Board will have upon the unions, local councils and

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[83] Ibid., p. 67.

[84] Ibid., 1926, p. 46.

employers, it would be foolish to predict, but we may be assured that because of the establishment of the Building Trades Department, the unions have been able to expedite amalgamation. It thus does away to some extent with jurisdictional disputes and gives the national unions an agency to help them control their local unions and the local councils. Industrial unionism has not arrived, but the substitute for activities contemplated by industrialists, which the Department provides, attests the adaptability and resourcefulness of the exponents of the federation of autonomous unions.

CHAPTER II

Metal Trades Department

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

As long ago in American trade union history as 1892, the president of the Machinists' Union reported that he had been in correspondence with officials of other metal trades unions concerning the question of federation. Representatives of the Boilermakers and the Blacksmiths met in 1894 with a group from the Machinists to organize a league of metal workers.[1] In the constitution adopted by the delegates to the conference held in Indianapolis a preamble stated the needs and the aims of such an organization. The "ever growing encroachment of organized and consolidated capital"[2] seems to have been the chief reason why some of the officers of the newly organized and not very successful unions favored concerted action on the part of unions in the metal trades. It must be borne in mind that the Machinists' Union was then only about six years old, that the Blacksmiths were about five years old and were in the throes of the Pullman strike, and that there had been two independent organizations of Boilermakers until September, 1893.[3] Any sort of organization that would give them a tactical advantage over the employer was likely to be favored by unions in such straits.

The constitution provided for the formation of Local Federated Metal Trades Councils whose chief duties were to be those of organizing the workers and adjusting grievances. Several years later the president of the Pattern Makers reported that the organization had ceased to exist, and assigned as reasons, "general apathy or lack of interest among the organizations affiliated."[4] Two years later the same offi-

[1] Proceedings, International Association of Machinists, 1895. See the Report of the President.

[2] Machinists Journal, November, 1894.

[3] Handbook of American Trade Unions, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 420, pp. 44, 47.

[4] Proceedings, Pattern Makers League (1898), p. 5.

cial in his annual report spoke of "an evident tendency among the metal trades to come closer together for defensive and offensive purposes." He said further, "I am of the opinion that ere long will see a federation of the metal trades that will be a powerful combination for good." [5]

No further formal effort towards a federation was made, however, until the birth of the Federated Metal Trades of North America. In the latter part of 1900, Samuel Gompers wrote to James O'Connell of the Machinists' Union concerning recent developments in the metal working industry. A reference was made to the agreement between the International Association of Machinists and an employers' group, the National Metal Trades Association, "by which, questions affecting the interests of members are to be considered and adjusted practically on a national, rather than a local basis." [6] It was said, also, that several instances had occurred since the adoption of the agreement in which local unions in the industry, other than Machinists,' had been refused conferences with the employers. When these unions sought, locally, to increase wages, to shorten hours, or to adjust other matters, the local employers had stated that the question would have to be considered and adjusted between representatives of the National Metal Trades Association and the national officers of the interested unions.[7] Because of this trend toward national organization on the part of the employers, it was suggested that an alliance of the national unions of the metal trades could have much influence. Mr. Gompers sent similar letters to other metal trades unions, and called a conference of metal trades representatives at Louisville, Kentucky, in December, 1900. A temporary organization was formed then, and a formal convention was arranged for in St. Louis in July, 1901.

The meetings took place, as scheduled, in the Metal Trades Council Hall. The Machinists were not represented, but Mr. O'Connell sent a telegram expressing his feelings and

[5] Ibid., 1900, p. 7.
[6] Machinists' Monthly Journal, December, 1900, p. 658.
[7] Ibid.

saying, "you may rest assured that the I. A. M. will be foremost in the work of amalgamating the Metal Trades on a more scientific basis of mutual cooperation." [8] A constitution was drawn up and adopted, and those in favor of it were to ask for its recognition by the American Federation of Labor at the Scranton convention. In his report to that convention Mr. Gompers referred to the meetings and suggested that "inasmuch as the metal trades are coming to be controlled largely by the same employers or directors, an alliance or trade federation of the various unions of the trades is sought to be perfected, in order that the best interests of all may be guarded." [9]

During the sessions of the A. F. of L. convention, a meeting of the metal trades officials was held in the same city, and the Federated Metal Trades of North America was officially launched. Mr. Lynch of the Metal Polishers was chosen president, and L. R. Thomas of the Pattern Makers, secretary. The Executive Board of the federation met in Toledo, Ohio, April 2, 1902, to formulate plans for organizing local metal trades councils, and to arrange for having the A. F. of L. take both the national and local federations under its wings. In letters sent out to local unions of the trades, a sketch of the organization meetings and the "St. Louis agreements" was given. The letters stated that the Federation was opposed to strikes or disturbances in any industrial situation.[10] Existing independently of the American Federation of Labor, and without the support of the Iron Molders and the Pattern Makers, the 1901 federation was not long lived.

In March, 1906, a meeting of representatives of the Molders, Machinists, Pattern Makers, Blacksmiths, and Metal Polishers was held at Cincinnati to form a federation, not for defensive or offensive purposes, but in order to effect a better organization of those districts which influenced the conditions prevailing in the industrial centers. The whole

[8] Machinists' Journal, September, 1901, p. 676.
[9] Proceedings, A. F. of L., 1901, p. 18.
[10] Stove Mounters' Journal, 1902, pp. 473-476.

matter was referred to the national unions for endorsement.[11] Evidently the endorsement was not forthcoming, inasmuch as, two years later a recommendation was made and concurred in at the annual A. F. of L. convention that a Metal Trades Department similar in structure to the recently organized Building Trades Department should be formed.

Representatives of thirteen national unions, and of the Chicago Metal Trades Council met at Cincinnati in February, 1908, expressed themselves in favor of federation, and adjourned to convene again in June, 1908, to perfect the organization. At this second meeting representatives of ten national unions were present.[12] They proceeded to adopt a constitution.[13] James O'Connell was chosen president, and has held the office ever since; Mr. Gerndon of the Pattern Makers was elected secretary-treasurer, but gave way within a few months to A. J. Berres of the same union, who served until 1927. Since then, Mr. Frey of the Molders has taken up the duties of that office. Changes in the constitution, giving more strength and voice to local councils, were recommended by the delegates from the local councils of Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and St. Louis, but were not accepted.[14]

The first annual convention of the newly-chartered Department was held in Washington, D. C., in March, 1909. For a few years not much work other than organizing was done, but after this country entered the World War, the Department attained much importance. The need for munitions and ships gave strength to the metal trades unions, and the officials of the Department played important parts on various governmental boards. The metal tradesmen have been hard pressed since the war. Many of the local metal trades councils no longer exist, but the Department is still intact.

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[11] Iron Molders' Journal, April, 1906, p. 260.

[12] The unions sending delegates were: Iron Molders, Machinists, Pattern Makers, Stove Mounters, Blacksmiths, Boilermakers, Metal Polishers, Steam Fitters, Steam Engineers, and Foundry Employees.

[13] Stove Mounters' Journal, July, 1908, p. 205.

[14] Iron Molders' Journal, July, 1908, pp. 497-498.

STRUCTURE

In its form of organization the Metal Trades Department practically duplicates that of the Building Trades Department. It, too, is a federation, control of which is held by the national unions of the industry. The Department is concerned with all metal tradesmen in manufactures as distinguished from the metal workers in the building industry and in the railroad shops. The Department's headquarters are also in the American Federation of Labor Building in Washington, D. C. Two paid officers, a president and a secretary-treasurer, have offices there. They spend much time on the road visiting various gatherings of labor officials and helping in the task of settling disputes and advising unions or councils in their relations with business men. At present (1927) there are sixteen unions affiliated with the Department, namely: the Blacksmiths, the Boilermakers, the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, the Draftsmen's Union, the Electrical Workers, the Engineers (Steam and Operating), the Firemen and Oilers, the Foundry Employees, the Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers, the Machinists, the Metal Polishers, the Sheet Metal Workers, the Molders, the Pattern Makers, the Plumbers, and the Stove Mounters.

Delegates to the annual conventions of the Metal Trades Department are selected by the affiliated unions.[15] These delegates are "entitled to one vote for each 100 members or majority fraction thereof."[16] One delegate may be sent by each local, state, or district metal trades council; each of such delegates is entitled to only one vote.[17] The vote of the national unions is far greater than that of the councils.

The local councils are smaller patterns of the national federation, and are composed of delegates sent from the various local unions of the international unions affiliated with the Department. It is the duty of the local unions of affiliated trades where there are three or more in the community to form a local metal trades council. It is provided that "in

[15] Constitution and By-Laws, 1927, Art. III, Sec. 2.
[16] Ibid. [17] Ibid.

the formation of local councils in Navy Yards, Shipyards or Arsenals where trades are employed, whose international organizations are not eligible to affiliation with the Metal Trades Department, such local unions may be admitted to affiliation with the local metal trades council," if their national unions permit, and if the latter are affiliated with the A. F. of L.[18] When the ship yards and munition plants were active many local metal trades councils were in existence, but with the slump that came after the war, these councils decreased in number. Only six councils sent delegates to the 1927 convention.

State and district councils developed during the war. Some of the international officers objected to their activities and wanted to prohibit their growth, but they were finally accepted and now there is a constitutional provision for their existence.[19] At one time there were several metal trade districts over which a district council had jurisdiction. These councils sought to act for the affiliated trades in the plants of the American Locomotive Company and the General Electric Company, at Schenectady, and also in several shipyards along the Atlantic Coast, at Seattle, and in the Great Lakes Region.[20].

The Executive Council of the Department consists of the two administrative officers and six vice-presidents representing six of the affiliated national unions. This body controls the activities of the Department. Revenue for the Department is obtained "by a per capita tax of five-eighths of one cent per member per month upon the entire membership of the affiliated national and international organizations." [21]

FUNCTION

The short history of attempts at federation given above has indicated some of the objectives sought in such schemes. They are set forth in the constitution of the Department as follows:

[18] Ibid., Art. VII, Sec. 1.
[19] Ibid., Art. VII, Sec. 2.
[20] Handbook of American Trade Unions, op. cit., p. 8.
[21] Constitution and By-Laws, Art. VI, Sec. 1.

To encourage the formation of local metal trades councils, and to confer on these local bodies power whereby they may advance the interests of the metal trades workers; to settle jurisdictional disputes; and to establish better relations between the employer and the employee.[22] Seemingly, the Department has only positive functions to perform; looked upon as a substitute for industrial unionism, it is charged with the task of giving direction to joint movements of affiliated trades.[23] However, if this joint action is to be tried, and not merely talked about, the method for invoking the help of the kindred trades is that of voluntary cooperation. As a matter of fact, the Department has also a negative function to perform, namely, that of seeing to it that projected schemes of local or district councils are not contrary to the laws of the affiliated national unions.

Discussion and analysis of the functions of the Department falls into three historical phases: first, from its inception to 1917; second, the war period; and third, the post-war period.

First Period.—The Metal Trades Department differs from the Building Trades Department in one important respect. Whereas many local building trades councils were in operation prior to the advent of the Building Trades Department, the Metal Trades Department had the job of inaugurating local councils, of instilling in the minds of local metal tradesmen the need for joint action, and of proclaiming the method of procedure that would be acceptable. During the first two and one-half years of effort, thirty-nine local councils were organized. A year later the secretary reported that "Out of seventy-four councils we have received dues from but thirty-nine; out of this number but twenty-nine are in good standing."[24] At each convention thereafter, reports of the president or the secretary refer to the addition of further local

[22] Ibid., Art. II, Sections 1 and 2.

[23] In his report to the 1913 convention of the Pattern Makers' League, Mr. Wilson, president of that union, said: "The Department was organized to bring about joint action between the affiliated Metal Trades." Proceedings, p. 25.

[24] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1912, p. 13.

metal trades councils. It was difficult to get eligible local unions to affiliate with the councils. Design as well as inertia undoubtedly brought about such conditions. If the local unions did not affiliate, they would not have to help finance the council. It is probable, also, that some of the national unions did not strenouously urge their locals to join. No one union was the chief laggard in this matter; President O'Connell listed twenty-eight cities where from one to six local unions of eligible trades were not affiliated with the council.[25] At that time eleven national unions composed the Department.

On the other hand, the leaders of the local councils were clamorous for more power. Delegates from the councils to conventions were persistently criticizing organization by crafts, and requesting that more power should be put in the hands of the local federations so that joint action would be successful. The spokesmen favoring such policies used many methods to bring about the desired end. They were responsible for the demands that the local councils be allowed larger representation at the Department conventions. They were also the inaugurators of the district councils and later of the state councils.[26] At a time when old, well-established, adequately-financed and ably officered unions were favoring the establishment of contractual relations with employers and were frowning upon ill-considered strikes, especially sympathetic strikes, it was to be expected that they would oppose influences tending to undo the work of years. Unconstitutional strikes could not be financed by the national unions. To be successful, the planners of strikes must have sufficient funds to maintain the strikers during the conflict and must pick an opportune time to strike. The national union officials felt certain that leaders of projected local joint movements would not consider these requirements.

The officers of the Department considered it to be one of their duties to instruct some of the affiliated national unions in the need for high dues. In case of a joint strike some

[25] Ibid., 1914, pp. 20-21.
[26] Ibid., 1912, pp. 10-11, and 1916, pp. 32-34.

organizations could and would pay strike benefits to their members while others could not. The members who were unaided would become disgruntled and cause discord and discontent.[27] In line with this policy, Mr. Berres reported to one convention as follows: "One of the greatest weaknesses that we find to exist in our movement and one which prevents successfully carrying out joint movements and one which we have set out to correct from the very inception of this Department, is the low-dues-paying organization, for we can attribute most failures or slowness of progress to the fact that some internationals have not adopted a high rate of dues and per capita tax to carry on the work successfully or to make them financially able to join with other trades in correcting abuses or establishing better working conditions. I am, however, glad to report that to some extent we have been successful in this campaign for higher dues, for since the Department has been organized, the Pattern Makers, Machinists, Metal Polishers, Blacksmiths and Boilermakers have all enacted legislation in this direction. We shall continue our activities along these lines until we have created, at least to some extent, a uniform rate of dues and per capita tax among our affiliated internationals." [28]

From the very beginning the officials of the Department were plagued with the problem of satisfying the advocates of two policies. Was the federation to be a real federation, that is, was voluntary cooperation to be the policy; were the national unions to continue to practice trade autonomy, or were they going to allow the Department to determine what action to take? Would the Department be granted power to compel? Was industrial unionism imminent?

What began as a plea for representation and the right to vote at Department conventions soon assumed larger import and appeared in 1913 as an insistent plea for some form of organization that would permit real joint action. The plea took the form of a motion to change Article 10 of the constitution.[29] It was claimed that under the existing law, which

[27] Ibid., 1911, p. 5. [28] Ibid., 1912, p. 14. [29] Ibid., 1913, p. 45.

looked toward local joint action, there was no way of compelling all affiliated unions to support a joint effort. What was sought was a change in the laws of the Department that would make it possible for all crafts in the metal working industry to be combined when any craft in that industry was in conflict with the employer. Backed by the entire delegation of the Machinists, Blacksmiths, Metal Polishers, and Sheet Metal Workers, a roll call vote on the proposition favoring compulsory cooperation was carried. The vote of the majority of the Boilermakers and the total vote of the Molders, Pattern Makers, and the Plumbers could not stop the movement, but did show the strength of the minority group.

Under Article 10 as amended, a local council desiring to carry through a joint movement was first to secure sanction from the president of the Department. Then, if seventy-five per cent of the affiliated national unions determined to inaugurate a general movement, the local affiliated unions were required to take a strike vote in accordance with the laws of their respective national organizations. It was the duty of the national officers of these unions to forward the strike vote to the president of the Department, who would compile the same and forward the record to the officials of the affected crafts. To be approved, a strike required a two-thirds majority of the total vote cast. If approved, the president and Executive Council of the Department must issue the strike order. Members failing to comply would not receive the support of the Department, and national organizations refusing to comply with the strike order were to be suspended from the Department. It was provided further, that where the Department had inaugurated a strike or was involved in a lockout, no union affiliated with the Department was to sign an agreement governing a shop where other affiliated unions were interested unless approval was granted by the Executive Council of the Department.[80]

The adoption of such an amendment did not change the attitude of the stronger unions. The Molders, the Pattern

[80] Ibid., p. 51.

Makers, the Boilermakers, and the Plumbers would not agree. Without them, in certain establishments or communities, the other unions would be in just as difficult a position as they were under the former law. The Molders, the second largest organization in the Department and a consistent advocate of business unionism, sent a letter to President O'Connell in February, 1914, protesting against the change in policy. The letter reviewed the provisions of the new Article 10 and included this significant statement: ". . . regardless of the provisions of Section 1, Article 10. . . , its members (I. M. U.) will be governed entirely by the provisions of the Constitution of the International Molders' Union of North America, and will decline to have any strike vote taken by the membership of the International Molders' Union of North America, or any sanction to strike given, except in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the I. M. U. of N. A." [31]

The substitution in the Metal Trades Federation of a compulsory policy for the policy of moral suasion practiced in the other federations, especially the American Federation of Labor, evoked much discussion. At the next convention of the American Federation of Labor, at Philadelphia in 1914, advocates of the old method sponsored the consideration of certain resolutions which made necessary a return to the method of voluntary cooperation.[32] By holding over for an extra day the 1914 Convention of the Metal Trades Department, the officials interested in having the Department laws conform to the rulings of the American Federation of Labor were able to have the obnoxious features of the constitution rescinded. Delegate Frey of the Molders in discussing the need for a return to the old methods said: "I never was in favor of the A. F. of L. saying to any of its affiliated organizations that you must do so and so. I think that our Department should feel that when questions affecting the Metal Trades are taken up when one affiliated International is opposed to a law, it would be better to try to change an Inter-

[31] Ibid., 1914, p. 13.
[32] Proceedings, A. F. of L., 1914, pp. 446-457.

national's views rather than to force it to agree." [33] The question of compulsory versus voluntary cooperation was the real issue from the beginning.[34] It is tied up with the question of craft versus industrial unionism, so called, and also with that of place unionism versus local federated action centrally controlled.[35] Perhaps the episode of 1913-1914 did not completely settle the controversy. It did demonstrate, however, the potency of the control of the believers in expediency and realism.[36] Since then, in spite of recurrent mutterings for organization by industry and for amalgamation, the proponents of the "dominance of the national unions" have tried to steer a course that would bring the benefits of joint action without giving up the fundamental strength of craft organization.

Between 1908 and 1917 examples of joint movements were not much in evidence, but there were some attempts at local cooperation. The first joint strike sanctioned by the Department was that called on September 14, 1909, by the Cleveland, Ohio, Metal Trades Council against the Loew Manufacturing Company. It was contended that the Company had entered into a joint agreement with the local council, but had at various times violated the agreement by hiring non-union men. The Department held several conferences with the president of the firm.[37] Certain agreements were submitted to him.[38] When he was ready to approve, the Council refused to be satisfied with the proposed agreement unless one clause in it was interpreted to mean a closed shop. In 1911 the strike was considered a failure "because of the inactivity of some of the trades."[39]

The earlier strikes of metal tradesmen reported to conventions of the Department were not all joint efforts of local councils. In fact, the local councils were not very strong

[33] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1914, pp. 51-52.
[34] Ibid., p. 53.
[35] Ibid., 1915, p. 4.
[36] Ibid., 1916, p. 4.
[37] Ibid., 1910, p. 14.
[38] Iron Molders' Journal, November, 1909, pp. 775-776.
[39] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1911, p. 8.

bodies, and the lack of interest of many of the eligible local unions in various industrial centers rather limited the usefulness of the councils. Unions with grievances sometimes tried to enlist the aid of other unions working in the same plant or for the same company.

A resolution brought before the 1910 convention by a delegate from the Machinists' Union referred to a strike at the Bethlehem Steel Company at South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, which began February 4, 1910, involving 8000 metal craftsmen.[40] This strike illustrates quite well the usual procedure of local officials. The strike involved members of several crafts. They struck first, and then thought of forming a metal trades council and getting the aid of organizers from their respective national unions. The national unions would not pay strike benefits under such circumstances, and the strikers returned to work.

About a year later, at Philadelphia, 1,200 machinists had been discharged by the officials of the Baldwin Locomotive Company. Conferences of national union officers, whose locals were members of the allied Locomotive Builders Council, were held. Because of conditions in that industry, and because the national unions were unable to finance a large strike to a successful conclusion, the union officials recommended to the Council that a strike would be unwise. The Council agreed, but several days after the national officers left the city the Boilermakers walked out, and three days later "12,000 men laid down their tools in the plants in Philadelphia and Eddystone."[41] Twelve weeks later some of the locals decided to permit their members to return to work because some of them were destitute.

Before the Department had been formed, a metal trades council at San Francisco had carried on a joint movement for the eight-hour day. All of the metal working employers and trades were involved. President Valentine, of the Molders, acted as spokesman of the committee of the allied metal tradesmen. An agreement was finally reached on May 30,

[40] Ibid., 1910, p. 26.

[41] Ibid., 1911, pp. 6-7.

1907, and was signed by a representative from each of the ninety-seven firms and the local unions. The Iron Trades Agreement called for a gradual adoption of a shorter work day throughout a three year period until on and after June 1, 1910, eight hours would constitute a day's work.[42] At the 1910 convention of the Department the president suggested that "in view of the fact that the eight-hour day would become effective on June 1, 1910, an effort should be made by the Department to extend the zone of the eight hour movement along the coast." [43]

Los Angeles was selected as the place in which to carry on a joint effort at organizing and securing the extension of the shorter work day. The employers were well organized there, and were staunch upholders of the open shop. The Los Angeles Metal Trades Council presented an agreement to various firms employing metal workers. The conference and the terms of the agreement were refused. On May 28, 1910, one of the firms belonging to the employers' association locked out a group of union men. Two days later another firm did likewise. The local unions of the Machinists, the Molders, and the Pattern Makers voted to strike. When, on June 1, the firms refused their demands, the metal tradesmen struck every shop in the city except the railroad shops.[44] After the strike had been running seventeen months without success, up to November, 1911, the unions had mapped out a political program upon which they placed their chances for success.[45] The strike was called off the first week in March, 1912. No written agreement had been signed; all shops were working nine hours, and wages were as low as thirty cents per hour.[46]

Much financial assistance was received from the national unions, from the metal trades unionists at San Francisco and from other unionists and friends, but the Metal Trades Council had encountered hostile public opinion. In October, 1910,

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[42] Iron Molders' Journal, July, 1907, pp. 535-536.
[43] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1910, p. 13.
[44] Machinists' Monthly Journal, July, 1910, pp. 657-658.
[45] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1911, pp. 10-11.
[46] Ibid., 1912, p. 11.

occurred the explosion and fire in the building of the Los Angeles Times. From the very beginning active agents of the anti-union employers, especially Burns' detectives, attributed it to the trade unions. When the confession of the McNamaras came, trade unionists everywhere received a set back. More than any other thing, perhaps, the McNamara crime decided the fate of the first large joint movement of the Department for a shorter work day.[47]

One other important Department effort to demonstrate the effectiveness of joint movements met with failure. A proposal was made at the Rochester convention that a joint organizing campaign be undertaken. Three reasons were given for the selection of Erie, Pennsylvania, as the city to be organized: first, on account of anti-union sentiment, one union was not strong enough to carry on single-handed; second, there was disruption in the ranks of labor and lack of organization; and third, the Molders were already in the field ready to back up a city-wide strike.[48] Although no detailed report was given concerning the outcome, the manner in which an official referred to the joint movement in Erie permits of no other interpretation than the failure of the movement.[49]

References to other strikes take up much space in the convention proceedings, but few of them are examples of local joint action. Several unions were anxious to organize the plant of the York Manufacturing Company, at York, Pennsylvania, makers of refrigerating machinery. They expected to put pressure on the Company by having the workers who installed such machinery boycott the Company in various localities. The Company was able to thwart their plans chiefly because of conflicting jurisdictional claims. The Machinists and Plumbers, and also the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, claimed jurisdiction.[50] The Machinists finally were able to get an agreement with the Com-

[47] Ibid., 1915, pp. 11-12.
[48] Ibid., 1913, pp. 4-5.
[49] Proceedings, International Molders' Union, 1917, p. 9.
[50] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1915, pp. 14-15.

pany whereby they were given a free hand in organizing the machinists at the factory, in return for their declaration that the Company was fair, and that they would no longer refuse to handle or erect the machinery.[51] Similar controversies between the Machinists and the Elevator Constructors led to the failure of movements looking toward joint agreements with the Otis Elevator Company.

One of the most interesting strikes was at the General Electric plant at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. For years the men at Pittsfield had been unorganized. Efforts at organizing the plant, in 1915 and 1917, met with success, but some of the men were later discharged. A group of local unionists from the Schenectady plant, with a view to helping organize the men, had promised the Pittsfield workers that if they were not treated fairly the Schenectady men would go to their aid—to the extent of going on strike, if necessary.[52] The State Board of Arbitration and Conciliation had attempted a settlement without success. The Department had not been officially notified of a strike at Pittsfield, but the president decided to meet with the national union officers to attempt a settlement. The officials met at Schenectady. The local metal trades council had passed a resolution to call a strike if the strike at Pittsfield were not adjusted by a certain time. The Electrical Workers declared that they would not work at Schenectady while the Pittsfield men were on strike. The general officers who met at Schenectady were not treated very graciously by the local council officers, but were able, nevertheless, to get the men to postpone action until President Wilson, of the Pattern Makers, had had a talk with the General Manager of the Pittsfield plant. This talk led to several conferences which resulted in a settlement and the calling off of the strike.[53]

The problems of the metal trades workers in the automotive industries, in the various foundries, contract shops, and other metal working shops have been different from those of the building tradesmen. To the latter, revolutionary

[51] Ibid. [52] Ibid., 1916, pp. 16-17. [53] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

changes in building methods and materials have emphasized trade jurisdiction disputes. The introduction of new machinery in the metal working trades, however, has tended rather to bring to the front the competition of the skilled mechanic and the semi-skilled, unorganized, and seemingly unorganizable machine tender. Jurisdictional disputes have nevertheless arisen.

One of the first disputes over trade jurisdiction arose between the Sheet Metal Workers and the Boilermakers. The former union was not in the Department prior to 1910. Its application for affiliation was opposed by the Boilermakers who claimed that there was a conflict of jurisdiction. The Sheet Metal Workers were admitted in spite of this opposition, and the Department then used its good offices to bring about a settlement.[54] For some time the Pattern Makers were aggrieved over the continued practice of the Machinists in admitting to membership the men who made metal patterns. The Machinists fought the jurisdiction claims of the Plumbers in regard to the installation of refrigerating machines, and tried, also, to get the Department to take a stand on the question of the affiliation of metal tradesmen with the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees. The latter organization was not a member of the Department, but was in affiliation with the A. F. of L. The Department naturally attempted to get a settlement for the Machinists through the parent Federation. The Department has never assumed authority to dictate in the matter of demarcation disputes.[55] It has merely insisted that local councils did not have the right to decide jurisdictional disputes, but must refer the matter to the national unions involved. If they could not mutually agree, the Department acted as a mediator or conciliator either by urging the national union officers to get together, or by talking it over at meetings of the Executive Council.

In spite of the fact that many have spoken disparagingly of the Department and called it a "farce,"[56] inasmuch as

[54] Ibid., 1910, p. 54. [55] Ibid., 1913, p. 42. [56] Ibid., p. 31.

militant local joint action had not materialized, the Department has made possible certain activities that would not have been carried on otherwise. With one or two officers at the Nation's Capital, it has been able to speak authoritatively for the metal trades employees of the government, in shipyards, navy yards, and in the Panama Canal Zone. It has also concerned itself with pending legislation. Some examples will illustrate the general nature of the Department's activity in these directions.

In 1911, the Secretary of the Navy, appearing before the House Naval Affairs Committee, appeared to favor a discontinuance of the eight hour provision in the Naval Bill.[57] As a result of the activities of the legislative committees of the Machinists' Union, of the A. F. of L., and of the Department, the eight hour amendment was kept intact, and an attempt was made to have the provisions of the act extend to the plants of the sub-contractors who supplied materials to the ship builders. Through these efforts a further amendment was adopted which made compulsory provision for building one of the battleships in a government navy yard.[58] At the Rochester convention President O'Connell reported that a "battle royal" attended the passage of the Naval Bill, but that the law was passed and signed, and would become effective January 1, 1913. It was provided that, "if a shipbuilding company takes a contract from the government to build a ship and desires to build it under the law, it will be necessary for such company to operate its shipyard on an eight-hour basis."[59] A year later the delegates were told that in regard to the eight-hour law "a number of decisions had been rendered by the Attorney-General and by the executive heads of departments that have almost made . . . the Law inoperative, at least in so far as the original intention of the amendments to the Law were to apply."[60] It was charged that the contractors had their men work eight hours on government contract work, but had them work longer on the same day on private contract work.

[57] Ibid., 1911, p. 5.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 1912, p. 4.
[60] Ibid., 1913, pp. 7-8.

Immediately prior to the War, scientific management, piece work, and stop-watch methods were bitterly opposed by organized labor. The Department played a large part in preventing the introduction of such methods in government plants.[61] Mr. Frey, an officer of a metal trades union, served on an investigating board set up by the Industrial Relations Commission to study the effects of scientific management on labor.

Under the provisions of an act which anticipated the completion of the Panama Canal, certain clauses were interpreted by the officers of the Department as effecting "material reduction in the wages paid to the mechanics and employees on the Canal." As a result of the work of the Department, a conference was held with the Committee on Appropriations, and a clause was added to the appropriation bill to the effect that the then prevailing wage scale should continue in force. The secretary estimated that this effort of the Department saved the affected employees about two hundred thousand dollars.[62]

Second Period. — Under war conditions, organization became easy, and new councils were chartered, both local and state. The shipyards of the Pacific Coast were completely organized. The Department, because of the strategic importance of industrial peace in the metal working industry, found its sphere of greatest influence in handling from headquarters disputes of government employees and workers in the war industries. This influence was especially important in the shipyards, and was greatly augmented by the fact that the secretary-treasurer of the Department was a member of the Shipbuilding Labor Adjustment Board.

This Board, popularly known as the Macy Board, came into existence through the efforts of the Department backed by the officials of the A. F. of L. and important national unions. Congress had created the U. S. Shipping Board and the Emergency Fleet Corporation. An agreement was entered into in Washington between representatives of labor, the

[61] Ibid., 1915, pp. 15-16. [62] Ibid., 1914, pp. 11-12.

Emergency Fleet Corporation and the Navy Department. "The Board, as finally constituted, was composed of Mr. V. E. Macy, chairman, representing the Public; Dr. L. C. Marshall, representing the U. S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation and the Navy Department, and Mr. Albert J. Berres, representing the American Federation of Labor. The Board's secretary was Dr. H. R. Seager." [63]

The Board was created August 20, 1917, and dissolved March 31, 1919. What was sought was "maximum production of ships without interruption by industrial disputes." The Department cooperated to this end. Unions in the Seattle area, for example, gave the Board much concern, attempting to boycott "unfair material." The Board expected the employees to exercise "good sense and patriotism," and this appeal was seconded by the Department.[64]

The Department constantly urged the Macy Board to call in national officers instead of local officials when making wage awards. The Department realized the need for uniformity, and saw no chance of getting it if local conditions were to be instrumental in determining the Board's action.[65] Mr. Macy admitted the strength of that point of view and suggested that its adoption would "eliminate the various conditions that cause discontent and rivalries." [66] The national unions, with a reputation to maintain, must be the spokesmen. They were the ones to enforce the discipline necessary for successful contractual relations.

The attitude of the Department officers toward the accomplishments of the Board may be seen in the report to the 1919 convention. It minimized the weak points, attempted to answer criticisms, and eulogized it to the extent of saying that of all government Boards, it was the most successful, and that because of it "hours were reduced, wages were increased and standardized, conditions of employment were

[63] J. C. Jenkins, Codification of the Shipbuilding Labor Adjustment Board Awards, Decisions. and Authorizations.—Government Printing Office, 1921, p. 7.
[64] Ibid., p. 15.
[65] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1918, p. 11.
[66] Ibid.

materially improved," the right of the men to organize was recognized and sanctioned. The report further declared that what stamped this Board as being the most practical and business-like was its success in seeing that the awards rendered were put into effect.[67]

Strikes occurred during the war period in the metal trades industry, but none of them was sanctioned by the Department. The Boilermakers were on strike in the plant of the New York Shipbuilding Company at Camden, New Jersey, for eighteen months. At Birmingham, Alabama, the local council sponsored a strike. It was a general strike of metal tradesmen for the inauguration of the basic eight-hour day. The council sent letters to the employers asking for the eight-hour day. They were unanswered. Later, the council made another similar request, and announced that if it were not granted by February 20, 1918, the men would strike. No reply was forthcoming and the strike occurred. The Department asked a conciliator from the Department of Labor to try to prevent the strike. He was unsuccessful, however, and an effort was made to have the newly created National War Labor Board settle the dispute.[68]

The Pacific Coast strike in the San Francisco and Northwestern Areas is an example of an outlaw joint action strike sponsored by members of metal trades unions who were interested in industrial unionism. Several unsuccessful conferences were held by representatives of all parties to the controversy. The significant point in the whole controversy was the fight for control between local officials and the national officers. The contention was that the local representatives would encounter difficulties in getting a conference with representatives of the employing shipbuilders. Even if a meeting were held, the national officers believed that very little progress would result unless they were there to assist in "ironing out the difference and agree to underwrite and assume responsibility of any contract made." [69]

A few jurisdictional disputes arose during the war. At

[67] Ibid., 1919, pp. 13-14.
[68] Ibid., 1918, pp. 20-22.
[69] Ibid., 1919, pp. 18-20.

Butte, Montana, a dispute between the Boilermakers and the Blacksmiths had vexed the local metal tradesmen for some time. Mr. O'Connell was selected as an arbitrator and rendered a decision, but it was not carried into effect. It was hoped by Mr. O'Connell as president of the Department that representatives would be able to get together during the 1918 convention and reach an understanding. A more interesting jurisdictional dispute was that between the Metal Trades Department and the Railway Employees Department, involving the men employed in the commercial locomotive and car building plants. The claim was made that there were many metal tradesmen employed in those shops who were not members of unions affiliated with the Railways Employees Department. It was argued that the Metal Trades Department was therefore better qualified to handle grievances of the men working in those shops.[70]

Third Period.—The post-war dislocation of the shipbuilding and other metal working industries developed grave problems. The Department endeavored to maintain its prestige by getting agreements in the shipbuilding industry. The war-time habits prompted such efforts. It was expected that thereby it would be able to maintain the conditions then existing in the industry. An agreement was entered into between the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation and the Department. Provisions were made whereby a committee composed of national union representatives would meet a similar committee representing the Company whenever necessary. The agreement is chiefly of historical interest; for the extraordinary slump that occurred in the American building industry gave it no chance of trial.[71]

Continuing trouble on the Pacific Coast, the falling away in membership of the affiliated unions,[72] the recurrence of a new anti-union drive by employers, the disrupting tactics of

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[70] Ibid., p. 37.
[71] Ibid., pp. 14-17.
[72] The dropping away of the men called "war babies" by the unions—men who joined the unions for the purpose of getting high wages during the war.

the "One Big Union" and industrial union advocates, made joint action impossible. It became increasingly necessary that the advocates of "business unionism" should put down all proposals giving more power to local councils. Consequently, during the post-war period we find few examples of any joint functions that seem to indicate that Departments are tending toward industrial unionism. The character of the work of the Department officers indicates, however, rather that the leaders of the American Trade Union movement had brought into being special clearing houses for certain problems, and had added to their permanent force of experienced men in strategic places.

Since the war, the affiliated unions have been concerned with the problem of holding their membership. Organizing again has become prominent. In spite of a decreasing membership, the Department's finances have been kept in good condition. The Machinists, adopting the idea that in order to hold their membership during periods of industrial depressions or unemployment, additional and more liberal benefit features had to be provided, put into operation a life insurance plan. Insurance is furnished to each member at the rate of one dollar per month for each one thousand dollars, and the members must keep in good standing with their unions or forfeit the insurance.[73]

During 1920-1922, new local councils were organized and others were reorganized, but in 1923 the report stated that, for the first time, no charters were issued to new metal trades councils.[74] The tables, arranged by the secretary of the A. F. of L. showing the voting strength of the affiliated unions, illustrate graphically the downward trend in trade union membership. The Electrical Workers and the Sheet Metal Workers who are also members of the Building Trades Department, show a gain in voting strength up to 1921 and 1922, respectively, but unchanging figures thereafter.[75]

There is no doubt that the officers of craft unions have

[73] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1921, p. 15.
[74] Ibid., 1923, p. 4.
[75] Proceedings, A. F. of L., 1927, pp. 28-29.

found the maintenance of that form of organization exceptionally difficult during most of this period. The industrial depression of 1920-1921, with the accompanying slump in shipbuilding, added fuel to the fires of discontent. The "One Big Union" movement in Canada, the visions of power in the minds of the leaders of "outlaw" joint movements on the Pacific Coast and of various officials in several metal trades councils, and the persistent clamor on the part of some members of the Machinists and Metal Polishers for industrial unionism, naturally made the "old line" unionists more careful. Their difficult task was augmented by the activities of W. Z. Foster and of other communists and trade union critics who were "boring from within" and were given publicity through the Trade Union Educational League. In spite of all these distracting influences, the craft unions still dominate the scene.

Several important strikes consumed the time and money of some of the metal trades unions after the war—chiefly strikes to resist wage reductions, to secure recognition of their unions, and to resist the efforts of employers to get them to sign individual "yellow dog" contracts. At the plant of the United Shoe Machinery Company, Beverly, Massachusetts, the Machinists had gone on strike. Later, other unions became involved and sought the aid of the Department. A council was formed and chartered, but the strike was not a regularly initiated joint affair. Some unions had not joined in the movement.[76] Resolutions were brought to the convention which stated the grievances and asked for moral and financial help from the national organizations. The strike, which began March 15, 1920, brought to light once more the alignment of the officers who favor more frequent joint action and even amalgamation or industrial unionism, against the men who believe that hastily called joint strikes could not be anything but harmful.

In December, 1920, a more important strike took place at the yards of the William Cramp and Sons Ship and Engine

[76] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1920, pp. 41-45.

Building Company. A division of the Boilermakers' Union had had a long-standing controversy with the Company in connection with a readjustment of piece prices. Later, another group of Boilermakers struck in sympathy. The general manager posted a notice to the effect that the then existing agreement with the Metal Trades Department would terminate January 1, 1921, and that the Company was returning to the open shop. The posting of this notice led to the walk out of all the mechanical force employees except the Molders and the Pattern Makers, who had agreements guaranteeing a continuance of their regular relations with the employer. The Department stepped in and attempted a settlement. It even interested the Secretary of Labor in the difficulty, but to no avail. Four thousand men were involved in the strike, but the Company was obdurate. It was able to get enough men willing to work under conditions laid down by the Company.[77]

Another strike, in which there was a division in the ranks of organized labor, took place in 1921 in New Orleans. The New Orleans Metal Trades Council had secured an agreement with the Metal Trades Association and some independent shop owners covering hours, wages, and conditions of work for the locality. The Department assisted in securing the agreement. It was in force for about two years and is a typical joint trade agreement.[78] In July, 1920, a new agreement was entered into for a period of one year. At the beginning of 1921, the Metal Trades Association notified the local council of their desire to amend the agreement. They proposed a reduction for mechanics from 90c per hour to 80c, and for helpers, from 60c to 50c, and the introduction of the 48-hour week in place of the 44-hour week. Some of the union organizations involved were willing to accept the reduction, but the council voted to quit work. The result was a strike only partly supported. The Department counseled the

[77] Ibid., 1921, pp. 18-21.

[78] Matthew Woll, Wage Negotiations and Practices (published by the A. F. of L.), 1925, p. 5.

men to accept the reduction, but no agreement could be reached in regard to hours.[79]

These numerous examples of joint movements, only partially effective, do not necessarily indicate incapacity on the part of local unions to work together. They do show, however, the size of the task ahead of those who would practice collective bargaining in the metal working industry, and indicate the rôle of the Department officers as mediators, go-betweens, and counsellors.

Jurisdictional disputes, during the post-war period became increasingly annoying, but all the Department could do was to attempt to get the officials together, especially at the time of conventions, and to impress on them the need for settling their disputes. The president suggested that perhaps some form of tribunal could be arranged whereby the conflicts might be arbitrated. The national unions would not accept the advice. A resolution looking to the adoption of such a board was brought into the 1920 convention, but it was voted down. It was finally agreed that the Executive Council should "constitute a standing board of conciliation in jurisdictional controversies between affiliated organizations. . . ." [80]

The success attending the work of the secretary on the Macy Board led to the attempt to set up Industrial Boards at the various shipbuilding centers. The agreement with the Bethlehem Company, referred to above, was duplicated in other shipbuilding establishments, but they all became inoperative because of the extremely bad conditions in this industry. The secretary was again able to demonstrate the importance of the Department to government employees through his efforts in behalf of the employees in the Navy Yards. For several years the Department had acted as a representative of the navy yard employees. With the office in Washington, not far removed from the headquarters of the Navy Department, and with one man to act as spokesman instead of having representatives of many crafts and many sections who could never enjoy the same confidence of the Secretary of the Navy

[79] Proceedings, Metal Trades Department, 1921, p. 21.
[80] Ibid., 1920, p. 79.

and other high officials, the Department's role has been an important one. The interests of the employees were forwarded by having the local metal trades councils form a district council of Navy Yard local councils.

The Department used its influence to have a Navy Wage Reviewing Board created. This Board was to use the data sent in from the various Navy Yards as the bases for its awards. The Board consisted of three men: Captain J. K. Robinson, U. S. N., chairman; Mr. F. S. Curtis, chief clerk of the Navy Department, and Mr. A. J. Berres, Secretary of the Metal Trades Department. A comprehensive study was made and an agreement signed. Some criticism of Mr. Berres for signing the agreement followed, because a reduction in wages was provided for. Mr. O'Connell justified his actions, however, in this manner:

> The fact is that had we not succeeded in bringing about the formation of the Navy Wage Reviewing Board, or had we not been represented directly on the Board by Brother Berres or some one equally courageous and capable of handling our side of the controversy, we would have suffered a much more severe reduction in wages and we would have lost the 44-hour week and the 7½-hour day for technical men and clerks, the uniform rate for mechanics in the same trade, the proper recognition of our shop committees, the five cent per hour differential for night men, the differential in favor of Americans employed at Pearl Harbor and the assurance that the wage rate would not be changed for one year. . . .[81]

Continued pressure from various sources has resulted in a better assembling of local wage and cost of living data. Later awards of the Navy Wage Reviewing Board have been more favorable. The success in the Navy Yards has led to an effort to bring about the creation of a similar board in the War Department to take care of the metal tradesmen and other government employees working in the arsenals.[82]

Summing up the work of the Department, one must remember that, like the A. F. of L., the Department has both positive and negative functions to perform. The negative functions are illustrated by the opposition of the officials to the adoption of any trade union legislation which would undermine the "sovereignty" of the national unions by

[81] Ibid., 1922, pp. 13-14.

[82] Ibid., 1925, p. 4.

giving power to local council officials. On the positive side, the Department adds to the personnel of the general labor movement, and relieves the A. F. of L. of the task of handling the grievances that the metal tradesmen themselves can more readily solve. It helps the weaker unions in the task of organizing. It makes possible a central meeting point where trade policies may be discussed, and where experienced leaders, whose whole time is given to the industry instead of to just one union, may develop policies which may later bring about joint movements leading to joint agreements. The tendency toward industrial unionism, discerned by many at the time of the formation of these National Departments, has not blossomed into reality in the Metal Trades Department. The clamor for that form of organization, the plea for amalgamation, and the post-war activities of the "borers" from within has not changed the original plans of the founders.

CHAPTER III

The Railway Employees' Department

A. DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORY

The movement toward closer cooperation among railroad employees began at an early time. Previous to the formation of the Railway Employees' Department, the desires of the men for cooperation led to repeated efforts to form an industrial union comprising all workers in the railroad industry. Labor performed by railroad workers takes many forms. The history of the unions of the workers concerned with the movement of trains shows clearly the advantages of narrow craft unionism. The success that attended the "Big Four" Brotherhoods made them wary of alliances with workers in the repair and car building shops and with the maintenance-of-way men. Undoubtedly a feeling of superiority also had something to do with the Brotherhoods' policy. Perhaps it has been the success that attended the concerted efforts of these unions that has prompted unionists in the shops to try some form of federation. At any rate, these shopcrafts have been the chief protagonists of federation among the railroad unions of the American Federation of Labor. At times, other unions, like the Telegraphers, the Clerks, and the Maintenance-of-Way Workers, have been connected with the movement. A study of the Railway Employees Department is chiefly, however, a study of the activities of the Federated Shop Crafts.

Although some of the earlier attempts to form federations or industrial unions were not directly concerned with the shop men, the latter were influenced, as railroad workers, by such attempts. The schemes projected and attempted by these early "one Big Union" men were evidently too big for the workers to grasp. At any rate, most of the unions of that type have been short-lived. The grand officers of three "orders" of railroad employees met in Chicago, June 6, 1889, and instituted the Supreme Council of the United

Order of Railway Employees. In 1890, it included the firemen, switchmen, brakemen and conductors. They had even begun the publication of a journal, The National Federationist, but the Council disbanded June 20, 1892.[1]

The so-called Cedar Rapids Agreement which outlined a scheme of system cooperation among the Brotherhood Unions saw the light in 1893.[2] The Cedar Rapids scheme failed in 1897, but was soon followed, April, 1898, by a new organization—The Federation of American Railway Employees.[3] Mutual distrust ended the life of this Federation in 1900.

The year 1893 saw the formation of the American Railway Union. Eugene Debs was the moving spirit in it. Mr. Wharton, who for some time was president of the Railway Employees Department (hereafter sometimes called R. E. D.), explains the rapid development of this union by referring to the general belief held at that time by railroad workers, that the railroad officials had formed an association to deal with labor questions.[4] The fear that such an organization would be able to play off one craft union against another gave strength to the argument for an industrial union, and for federation.

The Debs Union struck in sympathy with the Pullman shop workers in 1894—a strike of great violence which was disastrous to the workers' organizations. Mr. Wharton also attributes the following period of inactivity on the part of the Shop Craft Unions to the "abortive strike of 1894" and the industrial depression of that year and the two following.[5] Mr. Debs did not let the failure of the Pullman Strike deter him from further efforts toward organizing an industrial union of railway workers. A rival of the American Federation of Labor in the West, the American Labor Union, drew under its control, April 10, 1903, an organization which had been formed January 27, 1901—The United Brotherhood of Railway Employees. It was a frank attempt at industrial

[1] Kirk, op. cit., p. 86.
[2] Sharfman, The American Railroad Problem, p. 324.
[3] Kirk, op. cit., p. 87.
[4] Industrial Relations, 1915, X, 9761.
[5] Ibid.

unionism. It published a journal, the Railway Employees' Journal, to which Debs was a frequent contributor. It ceased to function in 1903 or the year following.[6] All of the organizations referred to above were either attempted federations of train-crew unions, or were efforts of class conscious leaders to form industrial unions comprising all workers in the industry.

System federations had been attempted by the Brotherhood Unions. Miss Savage states that these federations were first formed by the "Big Four" Brotherhoods, and later were adopted by the railroad unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.[7] In his testimony before the Committee on Industrial Relations, Mr. Wharton mentions a system federation of machinists, boilermakers, and blacksmiths on the Santa Fe and the Union Pacific railroads as existing in 1892.[8] On many of the railroads of the country, the managements were meeting representatives of the various crafts, and negotiating a separate agreement with each. The conferences were costly to the unions and also to the carriers. In the early years, the officials of a railroad would secure separate agreements from the separate crafts for different divisions of the roads. When trouble arose they could play off the men of one division again those of another by doing the necessary work at the second place.[9] To offset this procedure, the crafts instituted a system of district organization and delegated authority to representatives to conduct the business of negotiating agreements for all the members of the craft on the entire system. The men thus secured system agreements with many of the railroads.

Under these conditions the management sometimes played one union against another.[10] Smarting under these tactics, fearful because of the federation of railroad officials in the American Railway Association, and incensed because of the efforts to introduce efficiency methods and piece work, the

[6] Ibid., p. 9760.
[7] Savage, op. cit., p. 43.
[8] Industrial Relations, op. cit., p. 9760.
[9] Ibid., p. 9761.
[10] Ibid., for example, the Machinists against the Boilermakers.

various craft organizations began to renew their activity, especially in the period 1900-1907. On the Union Pacific, strikes against the introduction of piece work became frequent in all crafts; on the Santa Fe, the Machinists, joined later by the Boilermakers and the Blacksmiths, struck because the company refused to enter into a federated agreement.[11]

The same complicating factor that was prominent in the developmental stages in the Building Trades and Metal Trades Departments was again here in evidence. System federations, able to negotiate agreements successfully, might become strong enough to get along without the national unions. The problem was, how to get joint action and yet keep the national unions in control. The representatives of ten crafts[12] signed a resolution presented to the Denver (1908) convention of the A. F. of L. proposing the formation of a Department. The resolution was unanimously adopted.[13] A further meeting of the representatives of the interested craft unions took place in January, 1909. On February 19, 1909, the Railway Employees' Department was chartered. At the January meeting, held in Chicago, Mr. H. B. Perham of the Order of Railroad Telegraphers was elected chairman, and Mr. D. W. Roderick of the Machinists, secretary-treasurer. The subject of system federations was discussed, and it was recommended that such federations be formed wherever possible. The new Department sought to increase its prestige by issuing charters to system federations. At the meeting Mr. Perham and Mr. O'Connell were empowered to act as special legislative representatives of the Department in Washington.[14]

By November, 1910, there were ten unions in the Department, and eighteen charters had been issued to system federations.[15] But there was a growing feeling among the rank and

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[11] Ibid., p. 9761.

[12] The Telegraphers, Freight Handlers, Boilermakers, Machinists, Car Workers, Blacksmiths, Clerks, Switchmen, Maintenance-of-Way Employees and Steam Fitters.

[13] Proceedings, A. F. of L., p. 242.

[14] The Railway Clerk, February, 1909, p. 51.

[15] The American Federationist, vol. 24, February, 1917, p. 116.

file that the Department was not militant enough.[16] Mr. Perham was suspected of using the Department's size and prestige in order to help promote legislation favoring the Telegraphers.[17]

It is well to bear in mind that workers in most of the shop trades belong to national unions whose members also work in the Metal Trades industry, and that the problems of these two groups are somewhat different. Besides, some of the union officials working for the system federations were anxious to show that joint action of a more militant type should be practiced by the Department. The sentiment for a form of organization which would include joint action in all its defensive and offensive activities grew stronger. Especially the workers on some of the western lines were dissatisfied. Representatives from system federations were anxious to meet in conference.

In the meantime, trouble between the system federations and the managements had arisen on the Harriman and the Illinois Central Systems. The men were incensed because the railroad officials refused to meet representatives of the system federations. The clamor for a more unified policy became insistent. Finally, the general officers of the interested crafts arranged for a conference to be held at Kansas City in April, 1912.[18] Representatives of the national unions, of system federations and craft district organizations were present, representing in all about forty railroad systems.[19] For nearly two weeks this conference was in session. When its work was finally ended a new federation was in the field, more radical, more militant and more representative of the rank and file—the Federation of Federations, so called because it was a federation of the system federations.[20] The Railway Clerk refers to the new Federation as ushering in a "new epoch—which practically eliminates all craft lines when it comes to dealing with the railroad corporation."[21]

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[16] Proceedings, Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, 1910, pp. 16-17.
[17] Interview, November, 1926.
[18] American Federationist, op. cit., p. 117.
[19] Ibid.
[20] The Blacksmiths' Journal, May, 1912, pp. 1-38.
[21] The Railway Clerk, May, 1912, pp. 159-160.

This conference of railroad workers on the western lines elected permanent salaried officials who were to devote their entire time to the interests of the Federation. Mr. A. O. Wharton of the Machinists was chosen president and Mr. John Scott was elected secretary-treasurer. The Department, formed in 1909, was still officially in existence. The question of merging the two organizations was brought up at its convention in November, 1912. The delegates adopted the constitution of the new Federation with only a few changes, and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. granted a new charter to the new and more militant R. E. D. The officers chosen in April became the new executives of the Department. The new constitution and by-laws were to be effective on January 1, 1913.[22]

Under the new arrangement, revisions took place in the system federations. Conventions were to be held biennially in even numbered years. Accordingly, the second biennial convention was held April 13, 1914. Regularly thereafter these conventions were held, until the Shopmen's Strike of 1922 interrupted. The convention for 1924 never materialized, but in the summer of 1926 delegates met at Chicago to hold the seventh biennial convention of the R. E. D.

B. STRUCTURE

In spite of the movement of 1912, membership in the R. E. D. is confined to unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Individual affiliation comes only through membership in a local union belonging to one of the component national unions.[23] The Department is divided into three sections: number one is composed of the Switchmen's Union of North America; number two is composed of: the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, Drop Forgers and Helpers; the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders and Helpers of America; the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America; the International

[22] American Federationist, op. cit., p. 117.
[23] Constitution and By-Laws, R. E. D., 1926, Art. II, Sec. 2.

Association of Machinists; the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; and number three is composed of the International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers, and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees.[24] The unions in section two, generally spoken of as the Federated Shop Crafts, are the dominant unions in the Department. The Department officials are primarily concerned with carrying out policies in the interests of these six craft unions.

The constitution vests legislative power in the convention. Evidence of the desires of the militants in the system federations is seen in the provision allowing delegates to be sent from the system federations. The national unions are dominant, however, and keep craft interests alive by the provision that "Each National, International or Brotherhood organization shall be entitled to one delegate to the convention from each railway system, wherein a System Federation has been chartered, as hereinafter provided. . . ." [25]

Further to clinch the control over the Department by the national organizations, it is provided that the chief officer of each national union shall be the delegate of his order to the convention. "Each system craft organization or System Federation delegate shall be entitled to one vote on all problems to be voted on except on roll call. A roll call vote shall be ordered on request of delegates representing at least three of the component organizations." It is further provided that "On roll call vote, each National, International or Brotherhood organization, as such, shall be entitled to one vote." [26]

The Department maintains headquarters in Chicago,[27] where the two salaried officers, President B. M. Jewell, and Secretary-Treasurer J. M. Burns, have their offices. The Executive Council of the Department consists of the presidents of each of the component organizations. It is provided that each such organization shall be requested to name

[24] Ibid., Art. II, Secs. 1-B, 1-C and 1-D.
[25] Ibid., Art. III, Sec. 2.
[26] Ibid., Sec. 3.
[27] American Fore Building, 844 Rush St., Chicago, Ill.

an alternate council member with full power to act for his union.[28]

The working unit in the Department is the System Federation, which "shall be composed of not less than three system craft organizations" whose national organizations are contributing members in the Department.[29] That is to say, on each railroad system where there should be, let us assume, several local unions (lodges) of each of the shop crafts, each local union may send delegates to make up a system craft organization; delegates from the various system craft organizations compose the conventions of a system federation. Each system federation, in convention, may adopt a constitution and by-laws for its government, but these rules must conform to the laws of the Department, and must be submitted to the president of the Department to be corrected, approved and attested before they become effective, or before they may be published.[30]

The officers of the system federations are a president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and an executive board. The first three are elected by the delegates in system conventions; the latter is composed of the general chairmen of the separate craft organizations. It is the Board that acts as the Conference Committee, and has authority to represent the system federation and its membership "in all negotiations with the management of the railway over which the System Federation has jurisdiction, when the negotiations are of a system character." [31]

The funds for the support of the Department are obtained chiefly from a per capita tax of one and one-half cents per member per month. This amount is collected only upon that part of the membership of the component organizations which is employed on railroads, and in locomotive and car equipment plants. It is payable monthly through the offices of the national unions.[32] Some money is collected through the sale of supplies and charter fees to system federations. Sys-

[28] Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 1.
[29] Ibid., Art. XII, Sec. 1a.
[30] Ibid., Sec. 1 (g and h).
[31] Ibid., Secs. 2 and 4.
[32] Ibid., Art. X, Sec. 1.

tem federations receive revenue for the support of their activities from the component system craft organizations. Authority is granted the federations in convention to levy and collect sufficient dues to meet the necessary and proper expenses.

C. FUNCTION

A cursory examination of the record of the shop craft unions leads to the opinion that joint action of related crafts very nearly approaches the plans of the labor leaders in the railroad industry. The account of the origin and development of the railway labor federations, given above, includes enough of the history of the train-crew unions to show that their attempts at federation were more immediately successful. The two groups—shop crafts and train crews—faced different problems of organization. The nature of their employment gives the train crew unions a great advantage. Members of the shop craft unions have to face the ever-present possibility of the competition of the unorganized men as well as the organized men who have received their trade training in ship yards, foundries, commercial car building shops, and in various other metal working establishments. This potential competition lessens the force of the pressure that these men can put on the carriers.

The historical sketch has indicated the desire for system federations and indicated the advantages to be gained if a suitable method could be formulated and adopted for bringing about inter-system joint action. The following pages will attempt an analysis of the chief activities of the system federations and the Federation of Federations—the R. E. D. For convenience, the discussion will be grouped under the following heads: 1. Organizing and educating the workers in the possibilities in system federations. 2. The developmental stage from 1912 to the war, with examples of joint movements, system strikes and joint or federated agreements. 3. The war experiences—the period of governmental control of the railroads. 4. The post-war difficulties under the Transportation Act of 1920, and the Shopmen's Strike of

1922. 5. The post-strike activities. 6. The handling of jurisdictional disputes. 7. Summary.

1. Organization and Education, 1908-1912. In his testimony before the U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Mr. Wharton pointed out the need for a form of organization that would make joint action possible. The success of a few joint movements in the west had demonstrated the possibilities. The mounting expenses under the old method of separate negotiations by individual craft unions on each system invited greater experimentation in the direction of federated action. The feeling that the carriers' association provided a means for concerted movement on the part of the employers gathered strength after the panic of 1907.

Early in 1908, what was believed to be a concerted movement on the part of the railroads to reduce operating expenses by a reduction of wages was opened by the action of the Southern Railway Company. The posting of notices announcing proposed reductions invoked a spirited and concerted response from the chairmen of the various system craft Protective Boards.[33] The Company sought the aid of Federal Government officers as mediators and conciliators, but had to give in and withdraw its notices of reductions. A strike, May 27, 1908, of the Carmen on the Missouri Pacific and Iron Mountain Southern Railway, and a "gigantic strike" on the Canadian Pacific in August, 1908, involving all the mechanical crafts, gave added impetus to the demands for joint action. The Grand Chief Carman of the Carmen's Union was in agreement with the action of the 1907 convention of his union which favored the affiliation of Carmen's Unions with the developing system federations, but he counselled the men of the Canadian Pacific that their action in going on a joint strike with the other shop crafts had been irregular and unwise.[34]

The advantages to be gained by the formation of system federations were known to the officers of unions on certain

[33] Proceedings, Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, 1909, pp. 10-11.
[34] Ibid., p. 13.

railroad systems where joint action had already been tried. Railroad executives were not in favor of such organizations, and some union officials were dubious of the motives of those sponsoring such federations. Nevertheless, enough interest had been aroused to bring into existence in 1909 the R. E. D. The facts have been given about this organization, which concerned itself primarily with propaganda and the promotion of legislation in the interests of certain railroad workers. It did, in spite of the innocuous character of its activities, call attention to the need for system federations and attempted to charter them.

The financial gains to the men in working through system federations, the example set by the train crew unions, the desires for more militant action, and the growing opposition of certain railway executives [35] increased the dissatisfaction of the shop craft union men. The problem was, how, under the system of organization by crafts to which they adhered, some form of system and inter-system concerted action might be attained. The answer was the new Federation of Federations which grew out of the convention of delegates from crafts on system federations in the middle west. The Federation of Federations attempted to do for the shop craft unions something of what Debs had attempted in earlier efforts; the plans differed, however, in that Debs had tried to organize a union of all railway workers. The new organization did not have such grand visions; it did not propose, first of all, to organize all the workers in the railroad industry. What it did attempt was concerted federated action on the part of a small group of very closely related trades. The period from 1912 to 1917 was one of experimentation.

2. The Developmental Stage from 1912 to the War. For the first two years after the formation of the R. E. D. the officers suffered disappointments. Many delegates to the Kansas City convention (1912) thought that the conference

[35] See Industrial Relations, op. cit., beginning p. 9699. Notice the testimony of Mr. Markham of the I. C. Lines, who refused to recognize the officers of the Illinois Central System Federation.

was called for the purpose of calling a general strike on all lines west of Chicago, because of the trouble on the Illinois Central and Harriman lines.[36] The cautious responses of some of the national union officers hindered the plans of those who expected revolutionary results. Another hindrance was the refusal of some of the unions, and of the officials of the A. F. of L., to recognize two federations in the same industry. That difficulty was removed after the delegates of national unions met in convention at Rochester in November, 1912, under the laws of the 1909 Department, and substituted the new constitution for the old, and the officers selected at Kansas City for Mr. Perham and Mr. Lowe. Lack of finances was another drawback; per capita dues were not paid because of the attitude of the national officers. Furthermore, a federation in the southeast had not been invited to the 1912 convention. This, for a while, caused much bitterness. The new Department was thought to be sectional.

The national officers tried to control the convention, but somewhat radical proposals were adopted in 1914. The vote on a general strike at this convention, supposedly hoped for by the so-called rank and file but opposed by most of the national officers because of inability to finance it, was in the negative. Secrecy regarding the outcome of the vote was maintained with the hope that an intimated threat of a general strike on all lines west of Chicago would aid in the negotiations with the general managers' associations.[37] The Department was strongly in favor of maintaining the exclusive authority of the national unions. The International Association of Car Workers, an organization dual to the Railway Carmen, undertook in 1914 to increase its appeal to railroad workers by changing its name to the American Federation of Railroad Workers, and by undertaking to enlist all railroad employees under the banner of industrial unionism. The Executive Council took the stand that any member of a union affiliated with the Department who knowingly worked

[36] Proceedings, Federation of Federations of Railway Employees, 1912, p. 9.
[37] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1914, p. 3.

with a member of this organization would be suspended from membership and might be fined or expelled. The Council denounced the president of the Railroad workers and suggested that he must have "exhausted the limits of his vile vocabulary . . . and all the available funds of his organization" in his first "emotional spasm."[38]

The first big task of the new Department was the handling of the Illinois Central and Harriman lines strikes. These strikes had begun September 30, 1911; and about 35,000 shop craftsmen were involved. The Federation of Federations convention was called chiefly with the idea in mind of evolving some method to combat the attitude of the executives of these railroads and allied lines. The carriers were unyielding in their refusals to meet representatives of the system federations. All efforts of the Executive Council to reach an "honorable settlement" by means of arbitration or mediation, had been of no avail. The strike funds of the affiliated unions had become depleted because of the long drawn out strike. A special strike fund solicited by the Department was inadequate and soon gone.

There was much criticism of the national union officers who were wary of coming to a hurried decision. They called attention to the financial inability of the unions to continue the strike and wanted to call it off in December, 1914. Further meetings of the Executive Council were held; finally a proposal to call the strike off on June 28, 1915, was voted on. Presidents Franklin and Kline voted against this action, stating that they must first ascertain the opinions of the other members of their Executive Boards, and must submit the question to a vote of the men.[39] Much ill feeling developed out of this controversy.[40]

A resolution was introduced at the Department convention in 1914 with the purpose of seeking the attitude of the delegates concerning the advisability of having the Department gather evidence in regard to the Illinois Central and Harriman Lines Case.[41] A committee was appointed to get a pub-

[38] Ibid., pp. 13-16. [39] Ibid., 1916, pp. 14-19. [40] Ibid., p. 84.
[41] Ibid., 1914, pp. 127-128.

lic hearing before the Commission on Industrial Relations, and it took up the question with Attorney Frank Comerford of Chicago on May 5, 1914. An agreement was reached whereby he would compile the data and present it to the Commission. That evidence, along with the contentions of the carriers, was given in full in the printed reports of the Commission.[42] Mr. Wharton laid much emphasis on the importance of speed-up policies.[43]

Up to April 13, 1914, the new Department had chartered only twelve system federations. However, out of a total of fifty-four federations in existence, there were forty-three railroad systems where system federations were organized and were working under federation agreements.[44] The Department lacked funds; and the president could not, at first, devote his entire time to the Department. As soon as they were able, the officers communicated with various system federation officers and tried to bring them into the R. E. D. A divisional federation—the Southeastern Federation—which was displeased by the sectional complexion of the 1912 gathering—remained aloof for some time. Some system federations had dual organizations affiliated, and could not meet the requirements of the Department laws. Other federations gave as an objection the requirement that a new charter fee of ten dollars had to be paid.

Two years later, forty-three system federations held charters attesting to their affiliation.[45] This development may have come as a result of the improved industrial conditions which followed the temporary decline after the outbreak of the European war or it may be attributed to the changes in the laws adopted at the second biennial convention. Under the new laws, sectional organizations within the industry were recognized. The important provision was that which established a mechanical section composed of the shop craft unions.[46] At that time only five crafts were included, but later, another was added, thus making the section consist of

[42] Industrial Relations, op. cit., vol. 10.
[43] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1916, p. 7.
[44] Ibid., 1914, p. 4 and pp. 57-58.
[45] Ibid., 1916, pp. 1-2.
[46] Ibid., 1914, pp. 156-157.

the Blacksmiths, Boilermakers, Carmen, Electrical Workers, Machinists and Sheet Metal Workers. Another provision of the new constitution established four divisions of the United States and Canada,[47] and looked to the adoption of divisional or regional federated agreements. Whatever the causes of the growth, the Department had increased its prestige and was getting sufficient funds to extend its influence.

The Department directed its efforts toward standardizing the system federations. The organization of the mechanical section or "Federated Shop Crafts" was a well-planned move in that direction. A joint committee could better carry on negotiations for the six organizations whose work consists chiefly of repair work in the various railroad shops where conditions are quite similar throughout the country. Mr. Wharton estimated that by April 15, 1915, federated agreements involving most of these crafts had been entered into on railroads with a total mileage of 93,345 miles.[48] The usual procedure, in substituting federated agreements for individual craft agreements, may be summarized as follows: first, delegates representing their respective crafts for the entire system met and organized a system federation; second, a joint advisory board made up of from three to five delegates from each craft was formed; third, this board drafted a proposed federated agreement which was usually drawn under the advice of the Department; fourth, the usual thirty days notice to the railroad officials was given. If negotiations were successful, a joint agreement was signed by the proper officials of the carrier and the representatives of the system federation and separate crafts. Sometimes, in the early struggles for recognition, the carriers would not meet or recognize the officers of the system federation. In that case the tentative federated agreement would be withdrawn, and a separate agreement containing exactly the same rules would be presented by each separate craft. The federation would select a committee from each craft to carry on negotiations. This

[47] Ibid., pp. 157-158.
[48] Industrial Relations, op. cit., pp. 9967-9970.

committee then negotiated an agreement subject to the approval of the federation committee, but the company was notified that no separate craft would sign up until all had agreed.[49] This method, "born of necessity and to overcome conditions and methods of procedure instituted quite generally by the employers," [50] resulted in uniform agreements concerning wages, the number of apprentices and their rates of pay, hours, what constituted overtime, a list of holidays, and the right of appeal in case of unjust discharge.[51]

The Department took the position that strikes should be a method of last resort.[52] Nevertheless, many strikes took place. A strike of the shopmen, on the Missouri, Oklahoma and Gulf Line, began May 10, 1913. It was not a "legal" strike, but the 1914 convention endorsed it and charged the officers with the job of giving it all possible assistance. The strike dragged on and the men became dissatisfied. The Executive Council received a petition asking that the strike end, and finally declared the strike officially off on December 28, 1914.[53]

A more important joint strike carried on by the shop crafts was that with the Kansas City Terminal. Conferences between the men and Mr. H. H. Adams, president of the Terminal, on May 28, 1915, had led the men to believe that a joint agreement would result. Instead, several union men were discharged. The Department sought to get recognition for itself through the national union officers. The men appealed, on June 1, 1915, to Secretary Wilson of the Department of Labor for the aid of a commissioner of conciliation. Mr. William Blackman went to Kansas City, but was unable to be of any help. A strike was finally sanctioned; the men quit work July 29, 1915, leaving the yards of their employer deserted. A change of attitude on the part of Mr. Adams resulted in an agreement adopted in August. Failure to live up to the agreement on the part of Mr. Adams brought

[49] Ibid., pp. 9970-9971.
[50] Ibid. See letter of Mr. Wharton.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Proceedings, R. E. D., p. 173. [53] Ibid., 1916, pp. 13-14.

forth an ultimatum from the shop crafts that they would strike September 22, 1915, unless existing methods were discontinued. Mr. Blackman was of help in the later conferences and was instrumental in having adopted, on September 21, 1915, an agreement that was mutually satisfactory.[54] Mr. Adams shortly thereafter resigned.[55]

The records of the Department, as given in the official proceedings, do not indicate support of the joint closed shop. They show the steady growth of a system of joint support of collective bargaining for trade agreements negotiated for the federated shop crafts by a joint committee working with or under the general direction of the officers of the Department. In the early stages, the struggle was for the principle of system federation agreements as opposed to separate craft agreements. Later, strong tendencies toward a wider form of organization were shown. Division No. 3 consisted of the lines in the territory "south of and including the C. & O. Railway, and as far west as the Illinois Central Lines."[56] In that section, a Southeastern Federation had been formed. It had originally been outside of the new Department, but at its convention at Norfolk, Va., in October, 1915, it voted to affiliate with the Department and was chartered as Division No. 3. It was given the credit of having established the first movement for joint action between system federations. Twenty-four thousand workers were benefited by this agreement with fourteen railroads. The movement began in 1913 and a joint conference between representatives of the Federation and the Carriers met in July, 1914, but was indefinitely postponed because of the industrial condition prevailing just after the outbreak of the war. Conferences were resumed January 12, 1916, and an agreement was signed March 17, 1916.[57] The agreement increased rates of pay for most of the journeymen craftsmen and their helpers, and established minimum time rates. It laid down certain rules regarding pay on specified railroads, and attempted to settle certain jurisdiction claims.

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[54] Ibid., pp. 21-28.
[55] Ibid., p. 30.
[56] Ibid., 1914, p. 158.
[57] Ibid., 1916, pp. 64-67.

These joint conferences were held in Washington, D. C., and were attended by many of the general national officers, by the Executive Board of the Southeastern Federation (Division No. 3) and by other representatives. President Wharton acted as chairman of the Federated Committee. The Electrical Workers were not a party to the agreement, because they had never had an agreement with any of the roads represented, nor had they been present at the first conferences in 1914. The railroads which signed the agreement were: The Atlantic Coast Line; Chesapeake and Ohio; Central of Georgia; Cincinnati, New Orleans and Texas Pacific; Alabama Great Southern; Georgia Southern and Florida; Vicksburg, Shreveport and Pacific; Mobile and Ohio; Norfolk and Western; New Orleans and Northeastern; Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac; Seaboard Air Line; Southern Railway, and the Virginian.[58]

During this period in one important respect the policy of the Department was opposed to that of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. The six shop crafts resisted the attempts of the Plumbers and the Painters to affiliate with the Department. Jurisdictional disputes existed between the Plumbers and the Carmen and the Sheet Metal Workers at certain division points. The difficulties that would arise if unions with hostile jurisdictional claims were admitted to the Department, were obvious. The officials objected strenuously to the efforts of the officers who were seeking affiliation for these unions. Finally, changes were made in Article 15 of the constitution of the A. F. of L. concerning Departments. On the basis of his interpretation of the discussion thereon, Mr. Wharton said to the Plumbers: "Summing up the situation in its entirety, the Executive Council of the Department is of the opinion that your organization cannot be considered as a basic trade in the railroad industry and therefore is not eligible to affiliation in this Department; furthermore, we believe that all questions of affiliation to the Department should properly come before a convention of the Department." [59]

[58] Ibid., p. 67.

[59] Ibid., p. 75.

3. War experiences. The entry of this country into the war and the subsequent assumption of control of the railroads by the U. S. Railroad Administration brought unprecedented growth to the shop crafts unions and unlooked-for opportunities and prestige to the R. E. D.[60] The Department officers saw that the federated movement was entering upon a new era[61]—an era in which the shopmen would share with other railway employees in governmental consideration.[62]

Conventions of Divisions Nos. 1, 2 and 3 in 1918 authorized the Executive Committee of the Department to proceed to arrange for a conference with the Director-General of Railroads at which the wage demands of the shop crafts could be considered. The officers "harmonized" the wage demands of the three Divisions.[63] In the meantime, Mr. McAdoo had appointed a commission to investigate wages and working conditions—the Railroad Wage Commission, or Lane Commission, as it was sometimes called, Secretary F. K. Lane being chairman.[64] The shop workers were not pleased that the Adamson Act of 1916 had granted the basic 8-hour day to the train crew men and not to them. Further dissatisfaction had developed over the low rates of pay to shop crafts employees as compared with men doing similar work in other industries; it was augmented by the steadily rising price level which threatened to undermine the shopmen's standards of living. The Lane Commission was to study the claims of the men; its findings were to be used as a basis for wage awards which, if given, were to be retroactive to January 1, 1918.[65]

These demands for wage increases on the part of the Divisions were a continuation of the policies that had been outlined and pressed upon the employers throughout the year 1917. The Department and its units, system federations and

[60] C. O. Fisher, Use of Federal Power in Settlement of Railway Labor Disputes, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin 303.
[61] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1918, p. 1.
[62] Fisher, op. cit., p. 69.
[63] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1918, pp. 2-3.
[64] Harry D. Wolf, The Railway Labor Board, p. 14.
[65] Ibid., p. 15.

regional federations (divisions), had been actively engaged in pushing wage demands and seeking joint federated agreements concerning wages, hours, working rules and conditions before government control began.[66] The assurances given by the Director-General in various "Orders" that a new era had arrived, and that representatives of the shop craft unions would be dealt with through the Department gave added strength to organizing.

The argument of the shop crafts was made before the Wage Commission by Mr. J. A. Franklin.[67] The Commission reported after about four months of intensive study and hearings. It took as a base the wage rates as of December, 1915, and recommended graded increases for all those employees who earned under $250 per month. With the findings of this Board as a base, the Director-General, in General Order No. 27, granted all the rates recommended except that he granted a somewhat higher rate than that recommended for the shop crafts and established a minimum hourly rate of 55 cents.[68] This Order was promulgated May 25, 1918.[69] The Lane Commission ceased functioning with the publishing of its report. It was succeeded by another wage Board—the Board of Railroad Wages and Working Conditions—a bi-partisan board with three management and three labor members, one of whom was Mr. Wharton. Some workers were dissatisfied with the wage rates established by General Order No. 27. The Carmen, especially, objected. Strikes and walkouts were threatened.[70] Subsequently, on July 25, 1918, Supplement No. 4 to the General Order was issued, granting further increases for certain mechanics of the shop crafts. This Supplement extended the 8-hour day

[66] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1918, pp. 20-23.
[67] Ibid., p. 3. Mr. Wharton had become an adviser of the Commission.
[68] Railroad Wage Hearings, 1920, Statements by the Association of Railway Executives' Conference Committee of Managers, before the U. S. Railroad Labor Board. May 17-June 7, 1920, p. 196.
[69] C. F. General Order No. 27 with supplements, etc., to June 30, 1919, U. S. R. R. Administration, Wages of Railroad Employees (Govt. Printing Office), 1919, p. 7.
[70] Railway Carmen's Journal, June, 1918, p. 335.

to these workers and provided punitive overtime payments for any overtime and for Sunday and holiday work.[71]

Throughout the period of Government control, the Department was largely concerned with the claims of workers in the railroad shops for higher wages, or improved working rules. The affiliated organizations, in spite of some grumbling, recognized the changed conditions and threw their whole support to their central agency—the Department.

In extension of the policy of the Department prior to Government control, whereby the officers sought to widen the area covered by joint agreements, the fourth biennial convention adopted a report which established a National Agreement Committee. This Committee consisted of three members of each craft from the three Divisions; it held its first meeting at Washington, D. C., July 24, 1918, with Mr. F. D. Laudemann presiding. The Committee proposed to harmonize the proposals contained in the tentative division agreements, and by using the Southeastern Agreement then in effect as a pattern, to construct a National Agreement. Daily sessions of this Committee from July 24 to August 20, 1918, brought their plans to fruition. The proposed National Agreement was presented to the Executive Council of the Department for approval.[72]

The first efforts to place the proposals before the Director-General resulted in delays until after the Armistice. At a meeting on November 30, 1918, Mr. McAdoo said that inasmuch as he was leaving his office, it would be improper for him to initiate negotiations looking toward the adoption of a National Agreement,[73] but indicated the possibility of turning the matter over to the Board of Railroad Wages and Working Conditions.

A joint committee of twenty-eight, fourteen representing the Regional Directors and fourteen the Federated Shop Crafts, met under instructions from this Board and attempted the difficult task of negotiating a National Agreement. On May 6, 1919, a joint report of the committee was made, but

[71] Railroad Wage Hearings, op. cit., p. 196.
[72] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1920, p. 2. [73] Ibid., pp. 4-8.

it showed that an agreement had been reached on only ninety-one rules, and that disagreements existed on one hundred and fifteen.[74] Both groups sent special reports to the Board for the purpose of indicating their official attitudes. After further negotiations between officials of the U. S. Railroad Administration working under the new Director-General, Walker D. Hines, and officials of the Department, the National Agreement was signed September 20, 1919, to be effective October 20, 1919.[75] Mr. Hines had previously stated that the demands of the unions would entail additional expenses for the railroads of $800,000,000.[76] President Wilson interested himself in the matter.[77]

While the conferences were in progress, "illegal strikes" in the Chicago District had broken out in August, 1919. These strikes began in Great Falls, Montana, and moved eastward to Chicago. The Department took the stand that they were sponsored by opponents of trade unionism and believers in the "One Big Union" idea. The Executive Council considered that the criticism of them by the strike leaders was hurting the position of the Council in the eyes of the public, and that this was directly responsible for the failure to have the National Agreement signed earlier.[78] The strikes ceased. Daily conferences with Mr. Hines continued until August 25, at which time certain proposals from President Wilson were received. On August 2, 1919, the Department served an ultimatum on the Railroad Administration advising that, unless a satisfactory settlement were made by September 2, 1919, the Federated Shop Crafts would authorize a general strike.[79] Conferences were resumed, in the meantime, and the National Agreement was signed in September, as stated above.

A curious outgrowth of these negotiations at Washington was the repercussion on Canadian agreements. System federations had been formed on eight Canadian roads. The

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[74] Ibid., p. 14.
[75] Railway Carmen's Journal, October, 1919, p. 371.
[76] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1920, p. 21.
[77] Ibid., pp. 24-25. [78] Ibid., pp. 70-71. [79] Ibid., p. 23.

Federation on the Canadian Pacific had not been allowed to affiliate with the Department because it had in affiliation Plumbers, Molders and Pattern Makers whose National Unions were not affiliated with the Department. Changes were made, and Division No. 4 came into existence. A committee representing this federation sought conferences with a sub-committee of the Canadian Railway War Board, a body similar in function to our U. S. Railroad Administration. A joint committee representing Division No. 4 and the Railway War Board adopted for the Canadian railways rules containing the substance of Supplement No. 4 to General Order 27 issued by Mr. McAdoo. The men thereby attained one agreement covering all shop mechanics in Canada—an agreement which "leveled up" the rates of pay and brought about shorter work hours. Later, the National Agreement, changed to meet Canadian conditions, was submitted to the Canadian Railway Board. The first session of the Joint Committee was held in May, 1919. Success not having been attained, negotiations were ended and a strike was threatened for June 18, 1919. The Board asked that the men await the outcome of the Washington negotiations, and agreed to apply the same agreement to Canada. The men decided, upon the advice of the Executive Council of the Department, that Division No. 4 should be represented at Washington. Accordingly, a Schedule Committee proceeded to that city, where the Canadian War Board was already represented. The War Board was dissatisfied with the National Agreement, but Mr. Jewell's aid was sought and an agreement was reached. A forty-four hour week for "Back Shopmen" was obtained, but there was dissatisfaction with the rates of pay decided upon.[80]

The National Agreement was lengthy, containing 186 rules.[81] The chief ones provided a basic eight-hour day, with exceptions and rules concerning the distribution of overtime; a method of filling vacancies, including seniority rules in con-

[80] Ibid., pp. 68-70.

[81] See Railway Carmen's Journal, November, 1919, pp. 1440-1450, for a full text.

nection with the reduction of forces; a method of handling grievances; certain general requirements concerning apprentices, namely, ability "to speak, read and write the English language and understand at least the first four rules of arithmetic" (Rule 40); rates of pay, increases of four cents per hour and nine cents per hour for various mechanics; and, shop conditions (sanitation, etc.) and free transportation.

A month after the date on which the National Agreement became effective, representatives of both parties to the agreement were ordered to meet jointly, to interpret it. On December 15, the joint committee convened at Washington. No meetings were held during the Christmas holidays and conferences were not resumed until January 15, 1920.[82] During all this time, the uncertainty as to what disposal would be made of the railroads engrossed the public mind. The Plumb Plan League was advocating government ownership, while other proposals looking to a continuation of Government control were advocated by some. Congress settled the matter by passing the Esch-Cummins Bill—The Transportation Act of 1920. The work of the Joint Interpretation Committee became unnecessary, because of the provisions of the Esch-Cummins Bill.

4. Post-war period. Under the terms of Title III of the Transportation Act of 1920, a Railroad Labor Board was created, consisting of nine members, three representing each of the three parties interested in the proper functioning of the railroads—the management, the employees, and the general public.[83] Along with the other "standard" railway unions, including the Big Four Brotherhoods, those affiliated with the Department opposed the passage of the Bills in Congress, but to no avail. The same group worked together in presenting claims before the new Board. From February 28, 1920, until the Shopmen's Strike which began July 1, 1922, the energy of the Department officials and the funds paid in by the affiliated unions were expended in bringing

[82] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1920, p. 67.
[83] C. O. Fisher, op. cit., pp. 76-97; and Wolf, op. cit.

to the attention of the Railroad Labor Board, the advantages of the National Agreement to all parties. The Department fought to have the National Agreements continued. These claims, along with the requests for increases in wage rates, came to the attention of the Board shortly after it came into being. The dissatisfaction growing out of the decisions of the Board helped to bring on the strike of 1922 and led, later, to the demise of the Board with the adoption of the Watson-Parker Bill—the Railway Labor Act—on May 20, 1926.[84]

The demands for wage increases, together with a copy of the National Agreement, were presented to the railroad managements in April, 1920. The rates specified in the demands were those which had been filed with the Railroad Administration, and later with the Bi-Partisan Board during 1919. The men requested that the rates be effective as of January 1, 1919. The whole matter, upon the refusal of the employers to grant the request, was referred to the U. S. Railroad Labor Board for settlement.[85] To express adequately the views of the men, the railroad organizations jointly sponsored a newspaper.[86]

Prominent among the demands of the unions was the establishment of National Boards of Adjustment, similar in structure and function to those put in operation by General Order No. 29 of the Director-General.[87] Section 302 of the Transportation Act (Title III) provided that "Railroad Boards of Labor Adjustment may be established by agreement between any carrier, group of carriers, or the carriers as a whole, and any employees or subordinate officials of carriers, or organization or group of organizations thereof." The employees, basing their contention on this clause, argued for a National Board of Adjustment, but they were opposed by the carriers who wanted separate boards.[88] The transportation unions withdrew their support in the campaign for National Boards after they found that they would be able

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[84] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1926, p. 76.
[85] Ibid., 1922, p. 2.
[86] Ibid., p. 160.
[87] Ibid., p. 9.
[88] Ibid., pp. 12-16.

to get agreements with the carriers establishing Regional Boards of Adjustment.[89]

The inability to reach a settlement as to wage rates kept the officers of the Department continually under criticism by the membership. Hearings before the Railroad Labor Board were set for the latter part of June. After study of the evidence presented at these hearings, Decision No. 2 was issued by the Board on July 20, 1920.[90] During the course of the hearings, with pressure for a prompt decision being put on the board, the Chairman, Mr. R. M. Barton, announced on June 12 that a decision would soon be made and that when made would be effective as of May 1, 1920. The Department on June 25 asked that the Board stay the issuance of the decision, but on the date given above, Decision No. 2 was issued. In spite of the wage increases granted, the Department officers were dissatisfied because no decision on rules and working conditions had been given. The Board did give direction, however, that "pending the presentation, consideration, and the termination of the questions pertaining to the continuation or modification of such rules, conditions and agreements, no changes therein shall be made, except by agreement, between the carrier and employees concerned."[91]

On December 18, 1920, the parties interested in the question of the continuance of the National Agreements were notified to present evidence and argument before the Board beginning on January 10, 1921.[92] The Board decided, on the basis of these hearings, that inasmuch as it was unable to find that all the rules embodied in the National Agreements constituted just and reasonable rules for all carriers, it would look to the two parties to confer and draw up rules consistent with principles that the Board set forth in an exhibit attached to the Decision which was handed down on April 14, 1921.[93]

The industrial depression of 1920-1921 presented an oppor-

[89] Ibid., p. 10.
[90] Ibid., p. 17.
[91] Decisions of the U. S. Railroad Labor Board, I, 18, Decision 2.
[92] Ibid., II, 89, Decision 119.
[93] Ibid., p. 91.

tunity to the railroads. In the interest of economy, the roads began a systematic decrease of their working forces and presented to the Board demands for wage reductions. The Board decided to hear the pleas of the carriers, beginning April 18, 1921.[94] The Department had engaged the services of Mr. W. Jett Lauck, an economist and statistician, to collect evidence to support its claims in the National Agreement Cases, and also in the wage demands. His evidence in the form of exhibits fills eight large volumes.[95]

Mr. Jewell, speaking before the Labor Board in behalf of the shop trades and the other unions affiliated with the Department, presented a general argument on April 28, 1921, to the effect that the Board should not consider a wage reduction in the face of a continuing high cost of living, and stated that the Department could show that the high operating costs were the result of mismanagement. He argued against a decision based on the "supply and demand" theory of wages inasmuch as Decision No. 2 had been based upon a "cost of living principle."[96] Nevertheless, the Board did sanction a large wage reduction, which it announced in Decision No. 147 under date of June 1, 1921, effective as of July 1, 1921. This decision reduced the wages of shop craft employees 8 cents per hour. It applied to 163 carriers and affected the members of 31 organizations.[97]

On June 27, 1921, Addendum No. 2 to Decision No. 119 was issued. Under this decision, the Board continued in effect the rules of the National Agreement except as to overtime and as to those roads where separate agreements had been adopted.[98] The Board issued Decision No. 222 on August 11, 1921—a decision on certain rules connected with the subject of overtime. The Department objected to this "piecemeal" consideration of the rules. It called to headquarters representatives from each craft and sent them on

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[94] Wolf, op. cit., p. 145.

[95] See exhibits under heading National Agreement Cases prepared by the Bureau of Research of the R. E. D. under guidance of Mr. Lauck.

[96] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1922, p. 57.

[97] Ibid., p. 59.

[98] Ibid., p. 56.

tour to the various important shops, in order to keep the men in line and to prevent ill-considered action. A ballot on an assessment of one day's pay was taken, but only one-third of the men voted. It was evident that a strike could not be properly financed. In 1922, an addendum to Decision No. 2, namely No. 6, included the Board's disposition of practically all the other rules that had been in the National Agreements.[99]

Naturally, the employees felt aggrieved by the turn of the wheel which was putting them in a worse position than they had been in before the depression of 1920-1921. The proceedings of the Department convention of 1922 are replete with evidence of their feelings. A resumé of the entire controversy between the Department and the carriers before the Labor Board was given at that meeting. The concluding parts of the president's report to the convention call attention to the further demands on the part of the carriers for wage decreases, with the counter demands on the part of the shop crafts for an increase of 5 cents per hour over the rates established by Decision No. 2. The failure on the part of individual conferences on separate roads brought the two contestants before the Board again during March and April, 1922.[100] Decisions Nos. 1028 and 1036 were issued May 25 and June 5, respectively. They granted further decreases to be effective July 1, 1922.

This supreme example of national joint action of the federated national craft organizations has been treated in many places, but its consequences have been of such importance that it may be worth while to bring together the Shopmen's Bill of Grievances in the strike of 1922. The grievances grew out of the adverse wage decisions of the Labor Board, the decisions concerning the National Agreements, the violations of the Board's decisions in regard to the rules, and the growing practice of the roads in contracting out their repair work thus defeating even the low wage awards of the Board.[101]

[99] Ibid., pp. 61-67.
[100] Ibid., pp. 117-122.
[101] Ibid., 1926, pp. 1-2. See also the telegram sent President Harding, July 12, 1922, p. 44.

In sanctioning the strike,[102] the Department officials acted upon the authority of a resolution passed at the 1922 convention, which directed that certain questions be submitted to the membership in the form of three strike ballots.[103] The resulting vote on these ballots which were sent out June 8, 1922, was overwhelmingly in favor of a strike. However, the appeal for a special strike fund sanctioned by the same convention,[104] to be built up through donations and used to institute commissaries where needed, met with a poor response. Efforts of the Railroad Labor Board to prevent the strike failed. The President of the United States tried to bring the men and the roads together after the strike had begun, but his proposals were rejected by the carriers. A novel proposal in the history of industrial relations was the offer of the Brotherhoods to act as mediators.[105]

There is no doubt that the action of the Executive Council in sanctioning the strike and sending out the order to all the local units of the affiliated unions was prompted partly by the feeling that it was impossible to hold the men in line longer. The post-strike discussions point definitely to the conclusion that the officers knew that the strike was unlikely to succeed.[106] This strike of about 400,000 shopmen assumed dramatic proportions in the few months succeeding its outbreak. The attempts at settlement mentioned above all failed. The rolling stock deteriorated, other industries were affected, and accidents increased. Attempts to estimate the cost of the strike to the railroads have been made, one writer putting it at $221,500,000 for the three months it ran until the settlement made at Baltimore in the fall of 1922.[107]

In the latter part of August, 1922, Mr. S. D. Warfield of the Seaboard Railroad arranged with Mr. Jewell for conferences with executive officers of certain railroads who wished

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[102] Ibid., p. 49.
[103] Ibid., p. 2.
[104] Ibid., 1922. See Discussion on Resolution No. 131.
[105] Monthly Labor Review, December, 1922, pp. 1178-1179.
[106] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1926, p. 144. Note the remarks of Delegate Humbert.
[107] Evans Clark, in The Nation, December 27, 1922, pp. 715-716.

to reach some settlement. While these negotiations were pending, added bitterness was injected into the controversy by the appearance of the U. S. Attorney-General Daugherty before Federal District Judge Wilkerson in Chicago asking for an injunction, which was granted September 1, 1922 — an injunction sweeping in scope, which put the Government on the side of the carriers. Many workers feared the consequences which they thought would result if they refused to abide by the orders of the Court, and their strike spirit was broken. The Baltimore negotiations continued, however, and eleven railroads and their subsidiary lines accepted a memorandum of agreement entered into between the Department and the carriers.[108] A General Conference Committee composed of ninety men from the various system federations ratified the agreement on September 13, 1922. In 1926, when the president of the Department reported the state of affairs in connection with the strike, he gave a list of the roads on which settlement had been made either on the basis of the Baltimore plan, other settlements or the unconditional calling off of the strike; there was only one railroad—the Pennsylvania—on which the strike was still officially in force.[109]

The strike seems to have demonstrated the weakness of plans that do not take into consideration the strength of the national union craft sentiment. The men could not be held in line; the unions would not sanction, for long, the paying of strike benefits; and the Department's plea for funds went unanswered. The remarkable thing is that in the face of a strike which began under a cloud of public disapproval, the unions in the Department were able to survive. By 1926 an officer was able to report that: "Although some of the organizations were slow to recover from the severe financial setback as a result of the 1922 strike . . . recent reports from the affiliated international organizations indicate considerable improvement. . . ." [110] The depleted treasuries may have had something to do with the fact that there was no R. E. D.

[108] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1926, pp. 62-63.
[109] Ibid., pp. 62-69.
[110] Ibid., p. 76.

convention in 1924. Nevertheless, the Department worked with the carriers in supporting a legislative campaign which led to the adoption of a different plan for handling railway labor disputes, embodied in the Railway Labor Act of 1926.

5. Post-Strike Activities. Since 1922, the Department has been slowly recuperating. Its recent history contains, however, one important episode. It has vigorously espoused the plan of Union-Management-Cooperation advocated by Mr. Otto Beyer, Jr., Consulting Engineer to the Machinists and the R. E. D. Mr. Beyer, at the 1926 convention of the Department, outlined the history, principles and practice of his plan, which has received some attention from certain critics under the title "The B. & O. Plan."[111] The plan was first given a trial at the Glenwood Shops of the B. & O. beginning in January, 1923. The success of the plan there led the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to enter into an agreement with Baltimore and Ohio System Federation No. 30, extending the program to all the shops of the railroad. In the meantime, Sir Henry Thornton of the Canadian National Railway, agreed to introduce the program on those lines. Later, similar polices were put into operation on the Chesapeake and Ohio and the Chicago and Northwestern Lines.

The basic principles underlying this new policy which the Department hopes to use in building prestige for itself in the eyes of management and the public are inportant enough to warrant their inclusion in full. They are:

> "First. Full and cordial recognition of the standard railroad unions as the properly accredited organizations of the employes.
>
> "Second. Acceptance by management of the standard unions as helpful, necessary and constructive in the conduct of the railroad industry.

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[111] Ibid., pp. 69-74. (The same speech, with some other remarks, has been issued by the Department in pamphlet form and is called—"The Cooperative Policy of the Railways Employees Department of the A. F. of L.")

"Third. Development between unions and managements of written agreements governing wages, working conditions, and the prompt and orderly adjustment of disputes.

"Fourth. Systematic cooperation between unions and managements for improved railroad service, increased efficiency, and the elimination of waste.

"Fifth. Willingness on the part of the managements to help the standard unions solve some of their problems in return for the constructive help rendered by the unions in the solution of some of the managements' problems.

"Sixth. Stabilization of employment.

"Seventh. Measuring and sharing the gains of cooperation.

"Eighth. Provision of definite joint union-management machinery to promote and maintain cooperative effort." [112]

It is expected that the extension of such programs to other roads will demonstrate the effectiveness of the method.

6. Jurisdictional disputes. These disputes have never assumed such alarming proportions in the railroad shops as in the building industry. The explanation lies partly in the use of the plan of sectional organization, and partly in the manner in which the six shop craft unions have protected their interests by refusing charters to system federations that dared allow certain unions to affiliate.

The Executive Council has interested itself in many of the disputes between crafts of the various system federations, and attempted to get some uniformity in the "special rules" for each craft, which rules formed an important part of the federated agreements presented to the managements. For example, in a dispute between the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths, the

[112] Ibid.

Advisory Board of the Wabash System Federation had rendered a decision on the question of "welding with oxy-acetylene torch all mud rings and smoke arch rings while some are riveted in place on boiler."[113] The work had been taken from the Boilermakers and given to the Blacksmiths. The aggrieved union took an appeal to the Council, and this body reversed the decision and said "that inasmuch as the General Presidents of the organizations at interest have mutually agreed that this work should belong to the Boilermarkers in another instance, it is the sense of the Executive Council that the same understanding apply to this same class of work in all cases."[114]

The chief jurisdictional troubles have centered around the new processes of welding—work which was formerly done by the Blacksmiths. Much tension developed on the so-called Acetylene Rule. A Special Committee on Jurisdiction was appointed at the fourth biennial convention (1918) to handle this question, as well as many others involving disputes between shop craft unions. In spite of the fact that the A. F. of L. had been appealed to and that an agreement had been reached by the Boilermakers and the Blacksmiths in 1916, the fights in all parts of the country had continued. Understandings between the crafts on certain points at issue were reached through the good offices of this Committee. The Committee recommended that all matters upon which no settlement had been reached, should be submitted to the decision of a Board of Arbitration selected by the Secretary of Labor, W. B. Wilson.[115]

Mr. Wilson appointed to this Board Messrs. Stewart, Moffett and Bendheim of the Department of Labor. This Board heard the contentions of all parties to the disputes, and awarded decisions, and later, interpretations of its decisions. They admitted that the questions grew out of "the discovery and the application of electricity and oxy-acetylene to the mechanical trades." They described the method in which this tool has revolutionized and disturbed the trades and

[113] Ibid., 1916, p. 70. [114] Ibid., p. 71. [115] Ibid., 1918, pp. 271-278.

stated as an opinion that "in the interest of industrial progress . . . the exclusive use of a tool or process cannot be conceded to a single craft or any group of workmen." [116] The work of the crafts involved was carefully delimited in the decision. On April 16, 1919, President Kline of the Blacksmiths telegraphed the Director-General of Railroads that there would be a general strike of the Blacksmiths on May 1, 1919, unless some unbiased board would interpret the decision of the Wilson Board.[117] The same Board reconvened May 28, 1919, and gave its interpretation on the following day.

The Executive Council in connection with this case adopted a plan which has been more widely helpful. It outlined the procedure in case disputes arose at any local point as to the proper application of the Wilson Board's awards. It was ordered that the shop committees settling local disputes should submit reports to the general chairmen of the crafts; the latter group was to send copies of their findings to the Department so that a uniform policy could be adopted.[118] The president stated, in 1926, that although the crafts were not entirely free from jurisdictional disputes, "this is the third convention in the history of the Department affecting the six shop crafts organizations [in which] we have not had some of these troublesome matters to refer to the Adjustment Committee."[119] This was attributed to the adoption of the plan mentioned above which is incorporated in the constitution (Art. II).[120]

One further case of interest in connection with jurisdictional disputes was the struggle between the Sheet Metal Workers and the Plumbers. From the beginning of the Department, the Plumbers had contested certain claims of the Sheet Metal Workers and had sought affiliation with the Department. Pressure from the A. F. of L. brought about

[116] Ibid., 1920, pp. 74-75.
[117] Ibid., p. 79.
[118] Ibid., pp. 82-86.
[119] Ibid., 1926, pp. 74-75.
[120] See Art. XI, Sec. 3, Revised 1926.

an agreement between the two organizations in the summer of 1918, but when it was submitted to the vote of the railroad membership of the Sheet Metal Workers, they repudiated the plan, under which they would have had to give up the work to the Plumbers. Again the A. F. of L. intervened to try to compel compliance with the agreement, but the railroad membership refused to affiliate with the Plumbers and severed their connection with their own National Union. These members held a convention in St. Louis in August, 1920, and formed a new organization—The International Association of Railroad Metal Workers, Apprentices and Helpers. They asked for affiliation with the Department. Later, by agreement with their parent organization, they returned to that body, and have operated since January, 1921, as the Railroad Branch of the Sheet Metal Workers.[121]

7. Summary. The analysis of Department activities indicates clearly that the R. E. D. is organized in such a way that advocates of industrial unionism might see in it, after a superficial survey of its constitution and activities, a tendency toward that form of organization.[122] In spite of strong pleas for amalgamation, and a demand that the Department assume powers not granted by the organizations affiliated with it, the officers have kept clear from such action and have been persistent in their efforts to keep the system federations from independent action. There has been, however, some complaint. The "unit vote" rule, peculiar to this Department, has brought some opposition from other organizations in the A. F. of L. and has led some delegates to believe that the Department could compel action by the affiliated national unions.[123] After the strike of 1922, four years passed before a convention of the Department was held. A feeling that the Department had usurped certain prerogatives of the national unions, and the feeling on the part of the Machinists that the "unit rule" was being used to their detriment, forced

[121] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1922, p. 163.
[122] Industrial Relations, op. cit., p. 9706.
[123] Proceedings, R. E. D., 1914, p. 113.

some of the ill feeling to light in the form of discussions on a new method of voting that would give more votes to the larger unions. One officer stated that no organization surrendered to any other Department "so much of its rights and privileges as it does to the Railway Employees Department." [124]

[124] Ibid., 1926, p. 141. Remarks of Delegate Evans of the Electrical Workers.

CHAPTER IV

The Union Label Trades Department

A. HISTORY

The example set by the Allied Printing Trades Councils in adopting a label sponsored by the affiliated printing unions, suggested to the responsible officers of other label unions the idea of a Union Label Trades Department.[1] Another factor more impelling perhaps, must be sought in the difficulties faced by unionists in 1909 and thereafter, growing out of the Hatters' Strike at Danbury, Connecticut. Samuel Gompers, a member of a label union, and some of his associates looked upon this strike as an outgrowth of an attempt on the part of the National Association of Manufacturers to destroy the union label. In a speech in 1909 Mr. Gompers definitely declared that two motives were back of the strike. He said, "Ostensibly it (the strike at Danbury, or lockout, as he termed it) was a concentrated effort of the hat manufacturers of the country to discontinue the use of the union label; in fact, it had for its purpose the reduction in wages and the imposition of onerous conditions."[2]

The feeling of bitterness engendered in the trade union leaders by the various court decisions on the boycott, and the growing use of injunctions to restrain the use of union journals for advertising "unfair" practices, indicated the need for concerted effort. It is not necessary to go into the history of the label here.[3] The unions using it look upon it as a form of silent boycott. Before the present Department was formed officials from label groups used to meet in conferences at some time during the A. F. of L. conventions. Some atttempts at local coöperation had been made prior to 1909. Local label

[1] Statement of the Secretary-Treasurer to the writer, December 29, 1926.
[2] Proceedings, A. F. of L., 1909, p. 40.
[3] See E. R. Spedden, The Trade Union Label.

leagues had been established in the West in 1903. Various women's label auxiliaries and consumers' leagues were also interested in the work of creating a demand for labeled goods.[4] Advertising the label and creating a demand for goods so marked was expensive. Lack of system and the need for centralizing the activities of the unions having labels had been noticed by some of the officials. Mr. John B. Lennon, who was the first president of the Union Label Trades Department, estimated that altogether the various unions spent a million dollars a year advertising their labels, and stated that "this expenditure is done without system."[5] A conference of union representatives at Norfolk in 1907 had recommended further conferences, two of which were held in Washington. They resulted in the adoption of a resolution favoring the creation of a greater demand for union labor and union labeled products, and recommending the publication of a "Union Label Law Digest." Later meetings of this group and other leaders resulted in a demand for the organization of a label department.

One month after the lockout of the Hatters, in January, 1909, Mr. Gompers was writing letters to various trade unions to call the officials to another conference. At this meeting, held on March 29, 1909, about fifty-seven representatives from about thirty organizations were present, including a few officials from the Women's International Union Label League and from two central labor unions. It was not a difficult matter to get them to pass a motion favoring the formation of the Department. A committee of nine was appointed to draw up a constitution. Their work was finished and presented the next morning. Before the end of the year, thirty-seven national unions were in affiliation. It is interesting to notice that this early movement on the part of trade unionists has a parallel in the present practice of trade associations whose advertising campaigns are designed to interest consumers in the group as a group, and not in the individual entrepreneurial units.

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[4] Ibid., p. 87.
[5] Proceedings, Union Label Trades Department, 1909, p. 3.

B. ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES

Only national unions affiliated with the A. F. of L. and using labels, cards or buttons may hold membership in this Department. Each union retains autonomy and control over the laws and regulations governing the use and issuance of its label, card or button.[6] Annual conventions attended by delegates chosen on the same basis as in the Metal Trades Department, but with one vote for each delegate, have been held since the beginning. Officers are chosen annually; a president, five vice-presidents and a secretary-treasurer are the officers; these men also comprise the Executive Board. The secretary-treasurer is the chief administrator and the salaried officer. One of his duties is to authorize and establish local label leagues or councils which shall attempt to carry out in their communities the publicity work of the Department.

The chief objects set forth in the constitution of the Department are: To promote a greater demand for union label products, and to investigate, devise, recommend and carry into effect methods for the advertisement of union label products.[7] By establishing the Department, the label using unions have a central headquarters which can act as a chief intelligence office. By means of the central office, combined with the discussion at the annual conventions, certain economies and a unified policy have been inaugurated. Trade unions pursuing publicity methods stand to gain just as much from combination and central control as do distributors who put their publicity plans into the hands of national advertising agents. The A. F. of L., in sponsoring the development of this Department has merely been acquiescing in a general present-day tendency. It develops a special bureau, as it were, of men especially concerned with certain trade problems; the existence of such a body eventually leads the individual trades to make use of its services.

During the past two decades, this Department with its headquarters at the A. F. of L. Building has made itself one of the chief publicity bureaus for the general labor move-

[6] Constitution, Art. I, Sec. 3. [7] Ibid., Art. II, Sec. 1.

ment. In various ways the Department has attempted to carry on its campaign of education and publicity. One of its persistent duties has been the establishment of the local label leagues. Only by urging local groups of workers to demand union label goods can it accomplish one of its objects. The union label means the closed shop, according to a Department president.[8] If union labor's demand for finished goods can be directed as a result of such activities, union control of job possibilities would spread.

The Department issues directories with illustrations of the various labels, and lists of the merchants and manufacturers using union labels. Each yearly report of the secretary-treasurer faithfully reports the number of directories sent out and the circular letters mailed. The Department has sponsored the activities of the Women's International Union Label League and Trade Union Auxiliary, and it has frequently donated funds to show its appreciation of the League's activities in its behalf.

The secretary spends much time traveling about the country, visiting local label leagues and addressing trade union conventions, and conventions of state federations of labor. Frequently, he or representatives of the Department attend meetings of farmer's associations and cooperative associations, and attempt to present labor's point of view and to point out the help that the associations can give by purchasing union label goods. In his report to the 1921 convention, this officer said that he had visited and addressed during the year the conventions of twenty-two national unions and of twenty-six state federations of labor.[9]

Mr. Tracy, an early secretary-treasurer of the Department, presented annually statistical tabulations intended to show an increase in the consumption of union label products. The increased use of Cigar Makers' and Bakery Workers' labels was presented as direct evidence of the value of the Department.[10] The succeeding reports of the president, however,

[8] Proceedings, The Union Label Trades Department, 1923, p. 10.
[9] Ibid., 1921, pp. 41-42.
[10] Ibid., 1909, p. 13; 1910, p. 19; 1912, p. 15.

make it evident that figures and optimism cannot make success out of failure. For example, Mr. Hays included in his report for 1923 a discourse on "The Apathy of Union Members," which repeated the usual yearly complaint that most union men were not spending their money on union label products.

The Union Label Department has protested against the sale of convict-made products. It objects to the appearance of these goods on the market when the goods are not plainly and prominently labeled as prison made goods. One early officer of the Department stated that shoes made in prisons in Maryland were labeled "P. M." He objected to that practice, claiming that it might be interpreted, "Pride of Maryland." [11] The Department recognized that suitable legislation passed in certain states for the regulation of the sale of convict made goods, even when enforced, could not be of much value since goods were shipped in from other states. For that reason, Federal legislation was sought.

Secretary Tracy died in 1916 and his work was done for a while by President J. W. Hays of the Typographical Union. The latter seemed surprised to find that of the 70 local label leagues supposedly organized and functioning, only 20 were sufficiently alive to fill in and return self-addressed cards sent out by the Department.[12] The local leagues were expected to keep drumming into the membership of the local trade unions the importance of asking for and purchasing union labeled goods. They were supposed to be the local distributing agencies for the publicity material sent out by the Department. In 1918 Mr. Nicols of the Union Label Council of New York sketched for the delegates the method adopted by his Council to increase the demand for union label products. He said that the chief reason why union members and their friends did not buy union products was that they did not know where to get them. Sometimes merchants would handle union label goods for awhile, and advertise the fact, then later they would quit selling them, but the purchasers would not be aware that they were no longer get-

[11] Ibid., 1910, p. 6.

[12] Ibid., 1917, pp. 17-18.

ting such goods. The Council was going to undertake the establishment of a union store—The United Cooperative Store, Inc. Mr. Nicols asked that the national unions subscribe to some of the stock.

Some central labor unions appointed agents to handle the direct distribution of union label goods. Mr. John Manning, secretary of the Department since 1918, mentioned in his first report that Mr. Vincent J. McHenry, of Baltimore, and Mr. S. Schwartz had had some experience with such schemes, but had found them to be failures. The Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, however, had established a Union Label Department which was doing some work along this line under the direction of a Mr. A. P. Bowen of Reading.[13] The idea of a store has been kept alive in many places. One was opened, in 1919, at 902 Broadway, Brooklyn, but did only $56 worth of business the first week and $335 worth in the eighth week.

Mr. Levy of New York, who appeared before the Executive Council on June 4, 1919, said that the work done by the Label Council officers was purely voluntary, and he requested the Department to send a paid representative to conduct label agitation for a year.[14]

Mr. Charles E. Sinnigen was sent to New York as the Department's representative. He spent his time visiting store keepers and trying to prevail upon them to handle union goods. Some of them responded by getting more union label products. Mr. Sinnigen communicated with the manufacturers of some of the union goods to try to get them to send salesmen to these store keepers to show them their lines. He helped the Council's newspaper, The Union Label Advocate, expand from four pages to eight pages.[15] A year later this same representative called attention to the formation in his territory of district label councils. It was expected that these more compact sections would make it much easier to reach the membership with label propaganda.[16] To interest the housewife, the holder of the purse strings, Mr. Sinnigen helped the

[13] Ibid., 1918, p. 34.
[14] Ibid., 1919, pp. 48-49.
[15] Ibid., 1920, pp. 52-55.
[16] Ibid., 1921, pp. 47-51.

district councils form women's social clubs in order that an appeal might be made directly to the chief purchaser of the household.[17] Evidently, the unions' and the Department's officers were pleased with the work of its special representative; in 1924, besides Mr. Sinnigen, the Department had special representatives in Boston, Chicago, Portland (Oregon), and in northern New Jersey.[18] They all work along similar lines; they try to reach neighborhood shopkeepers to get them to put in union goods by promising to advertise them in the papers of the leagues, and they try to keep the union men and women alive to the need for purchasing union goods whenever possible. In some places, the unions favor the establishment of union owned stores so that they can get quality goods; the members have complained, at times, that shopkeepers put in union goods of poor quality. When the customer is not satisfied with the poorer quality of union goods, the owner sells him or tries to sell him non-union made goods.

A few years ago the Department spent thousands of dollars in having made a moving picture, entitled, "Labor's Reward," which has been shown in many cities. In 1926, Mr. Manning reported that it had been shown at 591 meetings in 30 states to an estimated total attendance of 479,500.[19] In view of the fact that the total membership affiliated with the Department was about 626,019 in 1926, and that their children, wives, friends and others attended these showings, it seems safe to assume that the label unions have not made their members union-label-conscious. If the members do not go to view a free show which their own unions are sponsoring, how much more difficult is the task of getting them to insist on union made products when they are buying goods.

This Department is only included in this study for the sake of completeness; it has no resemblance in functions to the other Departments. The chief concern of the officers has been to keep all unions eligible to membership affiliated with the Department as contributing members. The backers of

[17] Ibid., 1922, pp. 36-40. [18] Ibid., 1924. [19] Ibid., 1926, p. 22.

the Organization use it as a means whereby uniformity may be given to the advertising campaigns of the label unions. The Department has been able to give more and wider publicity to the products of some of the smaller unions than the latter could do single-handed. The officers, who meet annually at the conventions, realize the enormity of their task and hope to save money by having the Department conduct the campaign for publicity. It brings the officers of unions with common problems together oftener than they would come if there were no Department. A well paid secretary also adds to the staff of experienced men which the American Federation of Labor is building up to lead the labor movement in the United States.

CHAPTER V

The Mining Department

The Mining Department differs in origin widely from the other Departments. No early local or national attempts at federation are reported. The early adoption of the industrial union type of organization in the two main branches of the mining industry made such organizations unnecessary. The growth of the United Mine Workers of America in the coal mining branch, and the activities of the Western Federation of Miners are evidences of the organization tendencies in the industry. The formation of a Mining Department was announced at the Atlanta convention of the A. F. of L.[1] The two unions of miners had organized the Department and had requested a charter from the Executive Council of the Federation. The application was received December 1, 1911, and the charter was issued January 8, 1912.[2] The Executive Board of the United Mine Workers at a meeting on June 30, 1911, had recommended the formation of such a Department; the secretary was requested to inform the Western Federation of Miners of this action and seek their cooperation.[3] Members of this latter organization were extremely radical in outlook; their history during the first decade of the present century was one of turmoil. They had been in and out of the A. F. of L., had joined another federation and were instrumental in forming the Industrial Workers of the World. A few of the members, impressed by the success of the coal miners' union, wanted to copy its structure and methods, or to form an alliance with the coal miners. They agreed to join the United Mine Workers in forming a Mining Department.[4]

The decision to form a Department that could be used as

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[1] Proceedings, A. F. of L., 1911, p. 323.
[2] Copies of Letters in Files at the A. F. of L. Building.
[3] Proceedings, Western Federation of Miners, 1911, p. 296.
[4] Ibid.

a central agency and headquarters for the mining industry was forced by the refusal of the U. M. W. to agree to an amalgamation of the two organizations at that time. In a report of the Executive Board of the metal miners' organization on January 16, 1912, a complete resumé of the movement for closer alliance or amalgamation was given.[5] At the seventeenth annual convention of the W. F. M., the following resolution was adopted: "That the Western Federation of Miners issue a call to all labor organizations in the mining and correlative industries to convene a joint committee for the purpose of drafting a constitution under which all the workers in the mining, coal, metalliferous and correlative industries can unite for common defense and other purposes." Seven delegates were appointed to attend such a joint conference with members of the U. M. W., the only organization agreeing to meet with the metal miners' group. A like committee of the coal miners met with the committeemen from the Denver organization at Indianapolis in January, 1910. After giving the question of consolidation much consideration, the joint committee decided that the time was not propitious for such a move.

It was pointed out that the U. M. W. favored and practiced the contract system and also the check-off system, and that the metal miners' union did not. Much more important, undoubtedly, in explaining the lack of interest in amalgamation on the part of the United Mine Workers was the fact that the Western Federation had a very small membership. Not more than 50,000 out of a possible 200,000 or more men in the metal mining industry were in the organization. Seemingly, the officers of the coal miners' union who had struggled hard to build up a strong organization were not willing to shoulder the additional burden of organizing the metal miners. There was nothing for the U. M. W. to gain in the proposed consolidation. It would mean using the funds of the majority for advancing the demands of a group that had been causing so much trouble to orthodox trade unionists.

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[5] The Miners' Magazine, January 25, 1912, pp. 6-8.

The United Mine Workers countered with a proposal containing these four policies: first, the continuance by the two organizations of their existing agreement permitting the mutual interchange of cards; second, cooperation of the organizers of both unions in organizing the non-union coal miners and metal miners; third, the Western Federation of Miners to apply for affiliation with the American Federation of Labor; and fourth, the organization of a mining department in affiliation with the A. F. of L. On May 9, 1911, the Federation was reaffiliated with the A. F. of L. Two months later, the communication referred to above from the Executive Board of the U. M. W. found the metal miners ready to act. The Department was formally launched in 1912.

The formation of the Department did not halt the movement toward amalgamation.[6] President White of the U. M. W., in his annual report to the convention of 1912 included an account of the activities of committees from the two unions.[7] A resolution offered to the 1914 convention that the two organizations be consolidated under one charter was discussed, but was not adopted. In lieu of the proposed action, a new committee to meet with one from the W. F. M. was appointed. The joint committee met in Butte, Montana, October 12 and 13, 1914, and, after an adjournment, reconvened on July 27, 1915. After a careful analysis of the proposed amalgamation, the joint committee adopted a resolution to the effect that amalgamation was impracticable at that time.

The reasons for this action were set forth as follows:

> The United Mine Workers was launched into being with a great mission to accomplish. That mission was to organize into one union all the men employed in the coal mining industry on the North American Continent. Today the mission of the organization has been but partly accomplished, as there are still some 300,000 unorganized coal miners whose product comes into direct competition with that of the Union Coal Miner, and who constitute the greatest barrier to the future welfare of our membership. The immutable law of self-preservation dictates that we throw all our resources into the work of organizing these non-union coal miners, whose

[6] Proceedings, U. M. W. of A., 1912, pp. 38-43.
[7] Ibid.

product is taking the markets of union mined coal. The United Mine Workers must of necessity use all of its strength in the immediate future, in a campaign of organization in Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Maryland, West Virginia, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the unorganized sections of Pennsylvania. So long as the States enumerated remain unorganized they will stand as a menace to and retard the progress of the Union Coal Miners of the country, and the pressure that is brought to bear upon the union miners by the competition of the non-union miners cannot be ignored, nor its consequences evaded, and in the working out of a practical solution of these immediate and all-important problems we cannot, regardless of what our desires may be, burden our organization with the additional obligations that must ensue, should an amalgamation of the two organizations be consummated. . . . The Western Federation has jurisdiction over territory extending from Mexico to Alaska, wherein are operations employing upward of 200,000 men eligible to membership. In this vast expanse of territory the men employed in the metal mining industry are but sparsely organized, less than 17,000 of them belong to the Western Federation of Miners at this time, therefore amalgamation would obligate the men employed in the coal mining industry to share their resources with the metal miners in the work of organization.

The remaining portion of the report is devoted to statements purporting to show how the existing arrangement made joint action possible. It was stated again that the product of the metal miner does not compete with that of the coal miner. In fact, according to the arguments of the coal miners, in time of industrial strife it would be more important for them to have an alliance with men in the transportation industry. They are much more concerned with the competition of the men employed in the production and marketing of oil and gas, and in the plants used to generate electrical power.

The A. F. of L. in granting a charter to the W. F. M. seems to have taken the stand that metal mining and coal mining were two distinct industries. At the annual A. F. of L. convention in 1911[8] the committee on adjustment brought in a general declaration in favor of "one organization, one trade" which was adopted. Some years later, the officers of the metal miners' union, accepting the decision that their organization was to maintain a separate existence, and recognizing that their affiliation with the A. F. of L. meant a larger territorial jurisdiction, recommended that the name

[8] Proceedings, A. F. of L., 1911, p. 334.

of their organization be changed so that it "might more adequately describe its scope and activity"; consequently, from 1916 on, the metal mining union men have been organized in the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.[9]

The presence of two industrial unions in the mining industry whose trade jurisdiction claims overlapped those of older craft unions whose local union membership worked in the industry was evidently one reason for the formation of the Mining Department. It may be, also, that the suggestion that a mining department be formed was one method used by the "business union" group in the trade union movement to bring the metal miners back into the fold; it could thus help them to adopt business methods and to combat the activities of the disruptionists in the Western Federation of Miners. At any rate, the president of the new Department gave freely of his time and advice in helping Mr. Moyer of the W. F. M. initiate the so-called time contract and check-off system, particularly successful practices of the U. M. W. To those members of the W. F. M. who were devoted to the creed of the I. W. W. it was a matter of principle to oppose the adoption of such methods. On the part of the employers the spirit of opposition to the union had been strengthened by the absence of such business methods and by the radical attitude of some of the members of the union.[10]

In structure, this short-lived Department was quite simple. Membership was to be confined to national unions. Delegates from the affiliated national unions were to meet in an annual convention of the Mining Department. A proper inference from a perusal of the few official proceedings of the Department available [11] seems to be that the chief work of the convention was complete as soon as the report of the president had been given and officers elected. The constitution provided for two officers, a president and a secretary-treasurer, and for an Executive Board of eight members—the two offi-

[9] Proceedings, W. F. M., 1916, p. 45.
[10] Ibid., p. 37.
[11] In the Library of the Department of Labor.

cers and six other members elected by the convention.[12] Later, when several other unions had become affiliated, each organization was to select one representative on the Board. After the convention of 1917, there was a proviso that local councils could be established by the president where he considered it advisable.[13]

The object of the Department as stated in its constitution was—"the greater unity of all workers employed in the mining industry and other industries governed by the laws of this Department, and the furtherance of the principle that an injury to one is the concern of all." The whole development seems to have been an empty concession to the demands of those wanting industrial unionism. It is a significant fact that no one disabused the membership of any of the organizations of their belief that all these Departments were moves toward such a goal. What would members gather from the following statement: "It is pleasing to report that there was a marked tendency in this convention toward the principles of industrial unionism. The day of the craft union is rapidly drawing to a close . . . . In this connection we see evidences of this spirit in the establishment of departments, such as the Building Trades Department, Metal Trades Department, Transportation and Railway Department, and several others. The object of the departmental idea being to cement the workers closer together and to have them all realize that their interests are the same and that they must work and fight together against one common enemy, instead of being divided along craft lines, as formerly." [14]

The activities of the Department consisted chiefly in the addition from time to time of new unions, and the work of the president as adviser to the member unions. During the first two years of its existence, the two mining unions were the only members. During the year 1912-1913 the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers became

[12] Constitution, Mining Department, 1914, Sec. 6.
[13] Ibid., 1917, Sec. 11.
[14] Proceedings, U. M. W. of A., Report of the Delegates to A. F. of L. Convention, 1911, p. 455.

affiliated. In 1914, Mr. Lord became president. Each year thereafter until the Department disbanded, he was the chief officer of this Department. He spent most of his time visiting the various strikes that were on in the metal mining fields, and later, when war had brought about maladjustments, in the coal mining sections. In 1915, he reported extremely dull conditions surrounding the mining industry—a result of the European War. His experience as a member of the United Mine Workers made it possible for him to be of great benefit to the workers in those sections where the ideas of "One Big Union" or industrial unionism were prevalent. A strike of metal miners in Michigan, and difficulties with disruptionists in Butte, Montana, during the period 1915-1916, made it necessary for Mr. Lord to give most of his time to the Western Federation of Miners. He helped them in their organizing and in their reorganization and attempted to get them to try to secure trade agreements with their employers embodying the check-off principle.[15]

After the United States entered the war, Mr. Lord became a member of the Committee on Labor of the Council of National Defense and was also on the National Coal Committee.[16] These two affiliations used much of his time so that he could not do very much traveling in the interests of the unions affiliated with the Mining Department. The increasing demands for copper for war uses and the consequent profit possibilities to the employers of the metal miners gave added prestige to the union of these men. The methods which had developed under the tutelage of the Department gave them opportunities for getting trade agreements with employers. Mr. Lord helped the Iron Miners and Operators in New Jersey in negotiating a joint agreement.[17] The National War Labor Board and the President's Mediation Commission were instrumental in helping to solve some of the more vexing industrial conflicts. The latter body investigated conditions in the copper camps of Arizona. A plan of

[15] Report of James Lord, submitted to Baltimore convention of the A. F. of L., pp. 7-10.

[16] Proceedings, A. F. of L., 1917, p. 149. [17] Ibid., p. 150.

settlement was worked out that called for the election of committees to represent the employees in presenting demands to the managements. The companies were not required to recognize the unions, but were not to discriminate. A better solution of the difficulties was impossible because of the disorganization among the men, caused chiefly by their division into factions as a result of I. W. W. activities.[18]

Between July 15, 1918, and March 15, 1919, Mr. Lord divided his time between the Mining Department and the Mining Division of the U. S. Employment Service, a bureau developed to help find men to work in the mines. Obviously, one result of the establishment of this Department was to add one more to the growing central staff of labor leaders.

After the third year of its existence, the following unions had become affiliated: United Mine Workers of America; International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (W. F. M.); International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers; International Brotherhood of Steam Shovel and Dredgemen; International Association of Machinists; Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers; finally in 1919, the International Association of Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers of America applied for membership and was accepted.

This last union of workers in the oil fields and refineries, an outgrowth of a combination of local and federal unions, needed the help of experienced trade union officials. Its membership in the Mining Department brought this to it in the person of Mr. Lord, who sat in an advisory capacity at their meetings with the operators at Santa Barbara, California. In 1917, a threat to strike, if the workers did not get the conditions they wanted, had brought into the California controversy a U. S. Commissioner of Conciliation, Mr. Charles T. Connell. The President's Mediation Commission, charged with investigating conditions in the oil industry, turned the problem in California over to one of its members, Mr. Verner Z. Reed. The latter, with Mr. Connell as advisor, met the representatives of the workers in Bakersfield, November 19-

[18] Report of James Lord, pp. 5-6.

26, 1917, and the operators in Santa Barbara on November 23, 1917. The work of the conciliators was rewarded by the adoption of an agreement that carried with it a $4 minimum wage and the eight-hour day. A Federal Oil Inspection Board, to adjust grievances and make awards, was appointed by the Secretary of Labor, but on May 18, 1919, the Board resigned. The Mediation Commission again took jurisdiction in the industry and proceeded to arrange for new joint negotiations and agreements. As a result, an agreement was reached which was to be in effect until June 30, 1920.[19] Factional fights in the union during the earlier months of 1920 put the union at a tactical disadvantage, however, and we find in Mr. Lord's 1922 report the admission that they were unable to get the operators to sign a new contract.[20] He traveled to California to assist in the negotiations, but was surprised upon his arrival to find that the operators positively refused to negotiate, but would announce their own terms. A strike of 8,000 workers ensued and lasted for a period of about eight weeks, when the men returned to work, accepting a reduction in wages of one dollar a day, other conditions remaining the same.[21]

The United Mine Workers also were experiencing difficulties with their employers and suffering from internal dissension. The depression of 1920-1921 was beginning to be felt. Metal mining was at a standstill in the copper fields; and the union of the metal miners must have lost one-half of its membership between 1918 and 1922.[22] The extreme depression then being experienced in this country, the resulting unemployment, and the shrinkage in membership of the affiliated unions made Mr. Lord's position still more precarious. After his short report of 1922, which called attention to the extreme depression in mining, nothing further is heard from the Mining Department. It passed out of existence in July, 1922.

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[19] Proceedings, A. F. of L., 1920, p. 225.
[20] Ibid., 1922, p. 453.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Judging by the number of delegates sent to the A. F. of L. conventions.

CONCLUSION

Enough significant material concerning the history and development, the structural arrangement and the activities of these Departments has been given to make possible certain generalizations. In the following pages an attempt will be made, first, to indicate the purposes or aims of the Departments; second, to give a comparative analysis of the functional aspects of these experiments in trade union grouping; and third, to offer an appraisal of the Department plan of organization.

I.

What is meant by the writers who have urged us to believe that the Departments are tendencies toward industrial unionism; that they represent industrial unionism in the upper level of labor? Presumably these students view the Departments as the attempts of the strong national unions to combine forces—to parallel the structure of modern industrial organizations—so that they may carry out nationally, by industries or parts of industries, certain joint activities. This view of the Department plan of organization seems to have been based on an assumption that the idea of craft organization and federation was outworn and soon to be superseded. What episodes in the historical development of the A. F. of L. or of the Departments may have been responsible for this belief? Is there anything in the structural arrangement of these Departments to lend support to such a doctrine? On the basis of the activities described in the preceding chapters, could it be said that these Departments do represent tendencies in the direction of industrial unionism?

The American Federation of Labor came into existence in the eighties as the rival of the Knights of Labor. The completeness of its victory over the Knights brought it no permanent immunity, however, from the unionists who were opposed to what they called narrow craft unionism. With persistent

criticism, these "millenium" unionists harassed the officers of the national trade unions and of the Federation. As a result, we find craft unionists and trade autonomists arrayed against a motley force demanding industrial unionism. In this dilemma, compromise measures effected a solution. Trade autonomy was still preached, but certain partly industrial unions were allowed to retain membership in the A. F. of L.

While these fights were taking place on the floor of the annual conventions of the A. F. of L. and some of its component unions, attempts were being made to evolve some workable form of inter-union intra-industry organization. The formation of local councils, the National Building Trades Council and the Structural Building Trades Alliance referred to in the early pages of this study show the efforts made to bring the craft unions of building tradesmen together to make a better stand against employers. Some of the persons interested wanted something more than federations—local and national; they wanted amalgamations or industrial unions. At the same time similar movements were progressing within the metal workers' ranks and among the railroad workers. The history of the development of the federation idea among the officials of the railroad unions of the A. F. of L. is a record of failure on the part of the industrial unionists to enlist the railroad workers under their banner. The "abortive" Pullman strike of 1894 put that form of organization under a ban. The need for some form of organization, based upon the existing craft union idea, which would make possible joint action of the unions—intra-system and inter-system—led to experiments which resulted in the system federation plan and later the R. E. D.[1]

All of these experiments might be cited as presumptive evidence that the criticism of the industrial unionists was taking effect. Later, when the American Federation of Labor voted to sponsor Departments, certain observers interpreted

[1] Throughout this chapter the following abbreviations for the various departments of the American Federation of Labor have been employed: R. E. D. for Railroad Employees' Department; M. T. D. for Metal Trades Department; B. T. D. for Building Trades Department.

this change of front as a complete capitulation. The feeling that these Departments were tendencies toward industrial unionism may have been heightened by Mr. Gompers' recurrent reminders that he had anticipated the Department idea in a speech made in 1888 at St. Louis. At the time the various national unions were considering the formation of Departments, Mr. Gompers reminded these groups of that speech in which he said that the Federation would have to institute industrial divisions. Coming as they did at the close of a period of bitter fighting between proponents of two divergent ideas as to the method of attaining similar ends, it is not surprising that the Departments were considered to be movements in the direction of industrial unionism. The struggle for the industrial form of organization had been carried on more often and more aggressively among the railroad workers. In his evidence given before the Commission on Industrial Relations, an officer of the Illinois Central admitted that he had opposed the Illinois Central System Federation because he thought it was an entering wedge for industrial unionism. If active railroad officials held such beliefs, it is easy to understand why outsiders have subscribed to similar ones.

Turning now to the defunct Mining Department, what do we find? Two exponents of industrial unionism, organized in two branches of one industry—mining—could not form a lasting Department. The outstanding industrial unions declined to fuse; the stronger would not amalgamate with the weaker. Such action does not lend support to the theory that the creation of the Department was a tendency toward industrial unionism.

The survey of the structural arrangements of the Departments provides no evidence to bolster up the contention that the Departments are a confession of the failure of the craft union idea and are tendencies toward the industrial form. In none of them do the national trade unions delegate power into the hands of delegates to conventions, administrative officers or executive councils so that any of these groups may inaugurate joint action on a national scale. Voluntary

cooperation has been the accepted method. The fight in the M. T. D. between the groups favoring voluntary cooperation and compulsion illustrates the strength of the craft unionists and federationists. The Railway Employees' Department comes nearest to granting the national officers certain powers looking to the initiation of policies for the common welfare of the shopcraft groups. It has been pointed out above that some officers of national trade unions consider that the Shopmen's strike of 1922 resulted partly from an unwarranted assumption of power on the part of the Department—power not granted by the federated unions. However, none of the officers of the national unions in the Departments seem to look with favor upon any scheme which proposes that their treasuries and forces be put under the control of officers chosen to direct the affairs of the Departments.

No officers, local or national, have ever admitted to the writer that the Departments represent a tendency toward industrial unionism. In fact, they seem to resent such a suggestion. If these organizations are tendencies in the direction suggested, the members of the affiliated national trade unions ought to be giving some indication of a more radical program. The Departments ought to be sponsoring, on a large scale, joint action in the matter of strikes and boycotts, and they should have done more to eliminate jurisdictional disputes. They should be using the power of a structure which parallels that of the present large-scale-business unit to blockade the employing group and to bring better rewards to the workers. As a matter of fact, the Departments are merely smaller editions—in separate industrial fields, instead of the whole field of labor—of the American Federation of Labor.

II.

To indicate the aims of the Departments, it will be necessary to give a comparative analysis of the functions of these organizations. Like the parent Federation, the Departments perform both positive and negative functions. For convenience, we may group the positive functions under these main

heads: (1) organizing; (2) the handling of jurisdictional disputes; (3) the joint support of strikes; (4) joint boycotts; (5) negotiating trade agreements; (6) acting as clearing houses for affairs affecting the common interests of the workers in their respective industrial fields; (7) lobbying and political activities; and (8) functioning as mediators and arbitrators in disputes between unions, members and their unions and between unions and employers.

(1) The task of organizing differs in the various Departments. It has already been pointed out that the Building Trades Department came into existence when many local councils were already flourishing. Organization work for the unions of the B. T. D. has taken the line of adding to the local councils and amalgamating certain national unions so that there will be only one national union in the trade. The officials of the M. T. D. and the officers of the Union Label Trades Department, were faced with the task of inaugurating local councils and local label leagues and have had repeatedly to resuscitate dying bodies. The R. E. D. found some system federations already functioning. Its organization work consisted of efforts to form additional system federations and to inculcate the principle of inter-system federation. It had to go through a trying reorganization period and had to evolve some plan of sectional organization so as to get smaller and more workable groups. Finally, as a result of this effort, the Federated Shop Crafts' section was formed.

(2) Jurisdictional disputes may be called the Achilles' Heel of the trade union movement. One of the avowed purposes of the three major Departments has been to reduce the number of such disputes. Both dual union and demarcation disputes have caused trouble. The B. T. D. was instrumental in eliminating the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, and thus getting rid of the dispute with the Brotherhood. It helped bring the Steam Fitters and Plumbers into one pipe-fitting trade union. Under its guidance the various small unions of roofers have come together. It seeks to merge the Stone Cutters and Granite Cutters Unions. The number of unions in the Department has been

cut to seventeen from the twenty-one which once held membership in the federation. In settling demarcation disputes, the B. T. D. has attempted to formulate a procedure that will eliminate some of the costly stoppages of work. The National Board for Jurisdictional Awards came into being to help rid the industry of such disputes. The fact that the national unions helped support schemes for doing away with the causes of disputes and for handling them when they did arise, placed the unions in a better light. The employer learned that there is a large number of union officers desirous of putting down such expensive forms of inter-union strife.

In the metal working trades, jurisdictional disputes are found chiefly among the railroad workers. In the period after the World War there was growing friction between some of the unions in the M. T. D., chiefly because of the enormous slump in the shipbuilding industry. Attempts of the business agents of the unions to keep their men employed naturally led to trouble because too many men were "running after the same employer." Demarcation disputes within the R. E. D. centered around the use of the oxy-acetylene torch. The Department used the services of the U. S. Department of Labor in an attempted solution. It is significant that the national unions have tried to adopt a form of organization and policies that look to the settlement of these disputes by peaceful methods. Certainly the activities of the Departments in this direction are full of promise.

(3) If the Departments were tendencies toward industrial unionism, we should expect to find frequent instances of joint strikes sponsored by the national trade federations. Such strikes have been most common in the building and railroad industries. We find no examples of joint action on a national scale in the building industry. The officers have not had to inaugurate joint strikes. On the contrary, they have sought some method whereby they might regulate such strikes. The B. T. D. has not attempted national or regional joint strikes to bring about closed shop conditions, or the right to organize, or shorter hours or higher wages. Joint move-

ments have been local affairs. However, this Department has helped the unions to put pressure on inter-city or interstate contractors so as to unionize certain establishments. Inter-council action, directed by the Department, has helped eliminate "unfair" contractors.

In the Metal Trades Department many unionists desired joint action, but the officers pointed out the need for making the dues more nearly uniform and for strengthening the treasuries before such schemes could be tried. Reference to the strike against the Loew Manufacturing Company will serve to indicate the difficulties. This effort to maintain closed shop conditions was not successful.[2] The joint movement on the Pacific Coast for the eight-hour day also ended in failure. Some local councils sponsored "illegal" joint strikes at times, but were not supported by the Department. These irregular strikes—for example, the one at Birmingham, Alabama, in 1918—were doomed to failure because the national unions controlled the purse strings and were not willing to give aid when treasuries might be depleted with no prospects of a satisfactory settlement in favor of the strikers.

The nearest approach to bona fide regional and national joint action may be seen in the activities of the Federated Shop Craft Unions. Although the R. E. D. has taken the position that strikes should be a method of last resort, there have been joint strikes. The Kansas City Terminal strike of 1915 brought about the adoption of an agreement mutually satisfactory. This strike was carried on for the purpose of forcing a joint agreement concerning hours, rates of pay and working rules. The strike of 1922 is the dramatic example of a national joint strike. The Department wanted recognition for the shopmen's unions; it wanted certain uniform rules to be maintained or retained, and it tried to paralyze traffic so that its demands for higher wages would be met. The examination of the failures of most of these joint strikes naturally leads to the generalization that the national unions

[2] See above, p. 51.

are either not willing or are not able financially to support widespread industrial conflicts. The older officers are not in favor of strikes, because strikes deplete treasuries that are only built up with difficulty. The officers do not admit that the Departments were formed with the idea of sponsoring regional or national joint strikes.

(4) The joint boycott is theoretically within the functions of the Departments. The Union Label Trades Department has attempted no joint boycott on finished goods. Its activities have been directed chiefly toward legislation against the sale of prison-made goods that are not so stamped, and to pushing and directing publicity that will keep the membership alive to the need for buying union label products. The reports of the officers bring out the fact that the cooperation necessary to enforce a boycott on finished goods is lacking. Some account has been given above of the effort of unions in the M. T. D. to carry out a joint boycott against the York Manufacturing Company by having members refuse to install refrigerating machinery which had been made by this company. Although an effort was made in several cities, conflicting jurisdiction claims brought failure. As far as the B. T. D. is concerned, the attempted strike on the Kansas City Union Station and the proposed one on the Field-Columbian Museum in Chicago may be called quasi-joint boycotts. Units of the Department were urged to refuse to work on jobs where the contractors were using stone which had been cut by non-union stone-cutters in other localities. The uncertainty of the leaders as to what constitutes a legal boycott, and the federated form of organization have made this form of pressure a difficult one to employ. The consumers' boycott has not been attempted, probably because the unionists realize its unworkableness. On the other hand, they are expending much money to make the membership label-conscious.

(5) The Departments wish to control the local units so that better contractual relationships may be established with the employers. The ideal of the conservative leader is the trade agreement. In the building industry, the growth of large-scale, inter-city contracting companies pointed to the

desirability of uniform agreements. The B. T. D. helped the Cincinnati Council in 1913 and the Detroit Council in 1914 to negotiate agreements with the contractors. The officers participate in many local conferences in order to give advice and to urge the adoption of agreements that will be standard or uniform. Sometimes the officers of large contracting companies will agree to meet in conference with local union officials, if they are urged to do so by the national union or the Department officers. The frequent conferences make the Department officers experts in conference technique, and they can influence local groups in widely separated localities to adopt similar agreements.

Most of the time of the officers of the R. E. D. has been spent, since 1916, in trying to get the affiliated unions to work for uniform agreements on railroad systems—regionally (inter-system) and nationally. The joint federated agreement of the Southeastern Federation, signed in March, 1918, illustrated the regional application of the principle of joint agreement. During the Government control of the roads, and in the post-war period, the chief labor difficulties of the carriers grew out of their resistance to the efforts of the R. E. D. to have a National Agreement concerning rules and working conditions adopted and retained. The agreement between the M. T. D. and the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company was an example of a type of agreement which war and post-war conditions brought into being. Regional agreements in the building industry, and regional or national trade agreements in the railroad industry were expected to stabilize and standardize the conditions of employment. The promotion of such uniform agreements is one of the most important functions that the Departments can perform. The future will probably bring more efforts in that direction.

(6) The Departments serve as clearing houses for the matters which concern the industry. Each Department is interested in gathering and disseminating information of interest to the workers of a particular industrial division. Frequent conferences of the national officers, either at headquarters or at strategic localities, help to develop an esprit

de corps and help acquaint the leaders with plans or affairs of mutual interest. Solutions for problems common to the several affiliated unions may be discovered, discussed and decided upon.

The M. T. D. issues a monthly bulletin—a publicity plan intended to develop a common attitude toward trade affairs. The activities of this same Department having to do with workers in the canal zone, in the Navy Yards and, during the war, in the shipyards, could not have been adequately performed by officials of the separate unions. The Navy Wage Reviewing Board has brought together better wage data and has been a factor in securing better and more uniform working conditions for many government employees. The B. T. D. collects and publishes the wage rates of the workers of the building trades in various cities of the country. The R. E. D. acts as a central research bureau for the A. F. of L. railroad unions; and has collected and published valuable data and statistics. The Union Label Trades Department eliminates some uneconomical duplication of advertising and centralizes publicity for the label trades unions. More material is amassed and distributed in this way than could or would be done if matters were left to the A. F. of L. or to the separate unions.

(7) Trade union officials have become skilled lobbyists. One important function of the Department officers is that of examining proposed legislation that may affect the affiliated membership. They also attempt to initiate bills or to guide through the legislative labyrinth bills that will aid the workers either directly or indirectly. For example, the officers of the M. T. D. may be expected to help push the plans of an administration seeking to set in motion an enlarged naval program, one which called for the construction of additional expensive ships. The R. E. D. leaders and the affiliated unions combined forces and funds with other railroad unions to help push through Congress a new railway labor bill to replace the labor provisions of the Esch-Cummins Act. It is expected that state councils will sponsor and aid legislation favorable to the industry within each state. Local councils can likewise put pressure on city legislative groups.

(8) If strikes are frowned upon and union officials are going to develop a better feeling between different unions and between unionists and employers, some machinery must be erected wherewith settlements may be consummated. The National Board for Jurisdictional Awards in the Building Industry is an example of one type of such machinery. That such a method was tried evinces changing attitudes on the part of employees and employers. The union-management plan of cooperation, in the field of railroading, is another example of what the Departments can do. Sometimes local inter-union fights have been settled by calling in a Department officer as an arbitrator. At other times, when disputes had arisen between unions, the Department officers had volunteered their services as mediators. The efforts of the president of the B. T. D., in 1914, as a mediator, brought the Detroit Council and the contractors together and resulted in the adoption of a satisfactory settlement. Without these available officers, such activities would not be performed, or would be inadequately discharged by A. F. of L. officials, by national union officers whose motives would be distrusted, or by outsiders. The Departments attempt to bring about such settlements, the services of paid officers being available at all times.

The positive functions just summarized are important ones, but no less significant are those we have called negative ones. One purpose of the Departments may be described as an effort to maintain "The Dominance of the National Union." [3] As has been suggested, the Departments, like the A. F. of L., have been set up as a bulwark to maintain the dominant position of the important national unions.

Various groups have threatened this dominance; the activities of dual unions, local and national, and of dual councils, in the form of illegal joint strikes, sympathetic or otherwise, constitute a constant challenge to the existing organization of the American labor movement. The B. T. D. has been more concerned in this matter than the other Departments.

[3] Cf. George E. Barnett, "The Dominance of the National Union," in The Quarterly Journal of Economics, May, 1913.

Because of the decentralized character of the building industry, local unions in this industry have more easily resisted the efforts of the national unions to control them. To protect their interests, the stronger national unions decided to federate in a Department of their own designing rather than to subscribe to a National Building Trades Council or a Structural Building Trades Alliance. There was one dual national organization in the railroad industry which caused the R. E. D. some concern—the Richardson group of carmen, the International Association of Car Workers.

Inasmuch as the several Departments have faced slightly different problems, we find them using different methods of procedure. When ambitious local officers of local metal trades unions, for example, decided to carry on a joint strike, they were generally informed by the national unions or the Department officers that financial support would not be forthcoming from the national treasuries. Furthermore, the Departments have tried to impress upon the low-dues-paying unions that dues must be higher so that there would be an equal financial burden on each of the federated unions. At times discipline has required sterner measures. When two factions of the Electrical Workers Union fought for the control of that union, the M. T. D. put its stamp of approval on one faction and urged other unions and the metal trades councils to recognize only that faction. The group supported by the Department emerged victorious and has since developed into a strong and aggressive trade union.

Local metal trades councils have at times been used by local officers to forward the plans of the industrial unionists. The national unions have successfully thwarted the efforts of the industrial unionists by voting down proposals which sought to give the councils voting strength at the conventions. The officers have withheld support when strikes have been called in an illegal manner, and have then stepped in to try to get a favorable settlement from the employers. The strike at the General Electric plant at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and the proposed sympathetic strike of the Schenectady

Council show how much more effective the work of the national officers is than that of the local leaders.

The B. T. D. has aided the national unions in developing disciplinary methods against recalcitrant local unions. It has tried to keep local councils from admitting dual unions to membership. To aid in the development of strong national unions, the affiliated unions have fought against the formation of dual national unions. Probably the chief concern of the B. T. D. has been that of controlling the local councils. The national body has tried to get the councils to accept the aid of national officers in the negotiation of trade agreements. It was felt that agreements of the Chicago type, which among other things called for local arbitration machinery, threatened the sovereignty of the national trade unions. The device of the universal working card, issued by the Department through an accepted council, is another method whereby the national unions strive to control the councils and the local unions.

In the R. E. D. we find somewhat different conditions. Fewer unions are in the Department and larger working units have to be controlled. For that reason the national unions through the Department formed the system federations. They could better protect their interests by joining in the movement and by keeping before the membership the fact that the proper method of organization was the trade union and federation.

When the reorganization of the Department took place in 1912, the national unions sent their important officers to Kansas City to control any radical tendencies. The "unit rule" in regard to voting, which has been referred to in the analysis of the R. E. D. functions, was a radical step. However, the growing feeling on the part of the officers of the two largest unions in the Department that the "unit rule" is working to the disadvantage of their groups may lead to its abolition. Twenty years have passed since this Department was formed and the national trade unions are still intact and still powerful.

III.

Of what value are these Departments as adjuncts to the present unionism? Do they furnish an adequate substitute for industrial unionism? Can we call them successful? What of the future? The A. F. of L. and the Departments represent one method by which the believers in craft or trade unionism have fought the critics within and without their ranks. The Departments do for the men of a particular industrial division what the A. F. of L. does for organized labor as a whole in the United States. They seek to become the official spokesmen for special labor groups. By adding to the number of general officers, the Departments have strengthened the publicity and research forces of labor.

There is a fundamental difference between saying that the Departments are tendencies toward industrial unionism and saying that they may be substitutes for that form of organization. The affiliated unions are not looking toward the formation of single unions in the various industrial fields. In fact, it has been one of the chief concerns of the Department officers that the separate unions be kept intact. Of course, if there were a multiplicity of unions, each striving to do the same work, jurisdictional disputes would consume much time and bring nothing but trouble. The unions have endeavored to solve that problem by causing amalgamations so that only one union may remain for each trade or group of activities considered as a trade.

To those who look upon the Departments as tendencies toward industrial unionism, the failure of that type of organization to materialize fully would brand the Departments as failures. However, if we consider them as devices for maintaining national union supremacy, then we must concede that they have been successful. The development of the Department idea provided the believers in autonomous national unions with a foundation on which to build if industrial conditions made local and national joint action necessary. It also brought the leaders with common problems of discipline together frequently, with the result that a common defense against local leaders with divergent ideas could be mapped out.

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